

East Africa: Tribal and Imperial Armies in Uganda, Kenya, Tanzania

Chris Peers

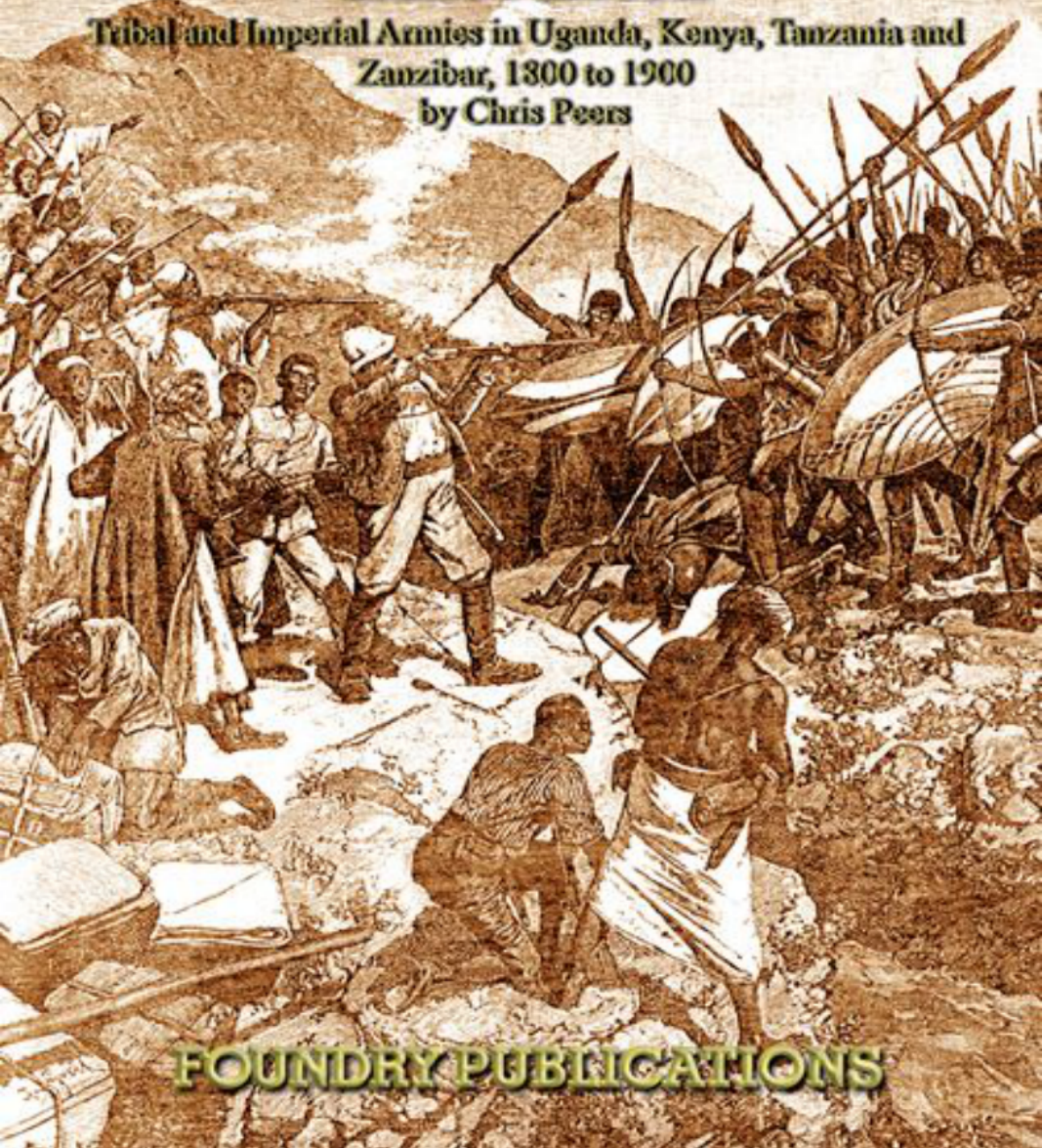
VISIT...

LANZAROTE
Caliente.COM

Armies of the Nineteenth Century: Africa East Africa

Tribal and Imperial Armies in Uganda, Kenya, Tanzania and
Zanzibar, 1300 to 1900

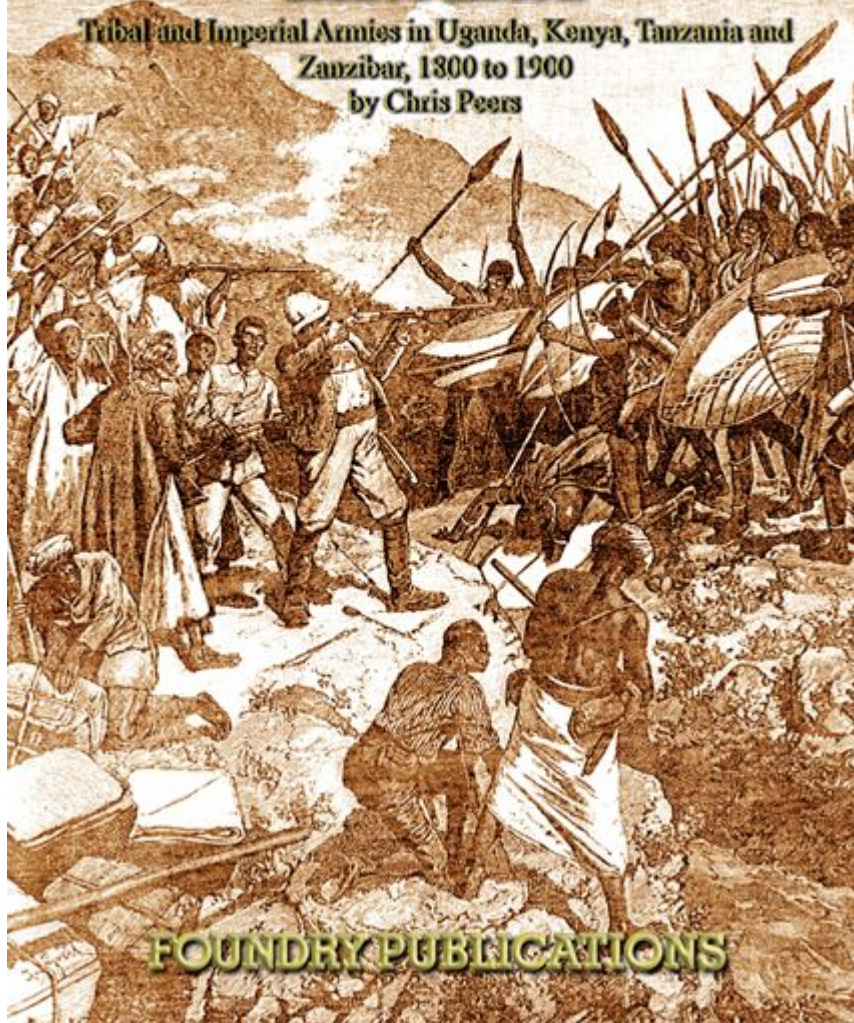
by Chris Peers



FOUNDRY PUBLICATIONS

Armies of the Nineteenth Century: Africa East Africa

Tribal and Imperial Armies in Uganda, Kenya, Tanzania and
Zanzibar, 1800 to 1900
by Chris Peers



FOUNDRY PUBLICATIONS

Armies of the Nineteenth Century: Africa

1: East Africa

Organisation, warfare, dress and weapons
124 figures, 57 illustrations, 8 maps

by Chris Peers

Drawings by Ian Heath

A Foundry Books Publication

Series Editor: Ian Heath
First published in Great Britain in 2003
by Foundry Books
24-34 St. Mark's Street
Nottingham
NG3 1DE
Tel 0115 8414141

Foundry Books is dedicated to furthering the study of all aspects of military history, and is happy to consider suggestions for new books on historical military subjects.

If you have an idea or project suitable for our list, please write to
Foundry Books Editorial Office
at the above address.

Text copyright © 2003 by Chris Peers

Drawings copyright © 2003 by Ian Heath

The right of Chris Peers to be identified as the author
of this work has been asserted in accordance

with sections 77 and 78 of the

Copyright Designs and Patents Act 1988.

ISBN 1-901543-35-8

ISBN 978-1-901543-35-3

Print ISBN: 9781901543094

Digital ISBN: 9781901543353

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may
be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted
in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical,
photocopying, recording or otherwise, without prior
permission in writing from the publishers.

Typeset & Digital scanning by Kevin Dallimore
0181 658 2488

Digital conversion by Kevin Dallimore

Other books by the same author:

Ancient Chinese Armies 1500-200 BC (Osprey 1990)

Medieval Chinese Armies 1260-1520 AD (Osprey 1992)

Imperial Chinese Armies 200 BC-589 AD (Osprey 1995)

Imperial Chinese Armies 590-1260 AD (Osprey 1996)

Late Imperial Chinese Armies 1520-1842 AD (Osprey 1997)

Warlords of China 700 BC-1662 AD (Arms and Armour Press 1998)

PREFACE

This book is unusual in approaching the era of exploration in East Africa as a military subject, covering both the native peoples and their Arab and European invaders in terms of their military organisation, battles and campaigns, and the tactics and equipment of their fighting men. It is one of a series which will eventually cover the entire continent. The area covered in this volume comprises, roughly, the present-day countries of Kenya, Uganda, and Tanzania. However, the territories of the Somalis and Gallas, comprising the part of Kenya lying north-east of the Tana River, have been left for a future volume on the Horn of Africa, while the peoples of the Equatoria Province of Sudan, whose history is much more closely involved with Uganda than with the Arab lands to the north, are included here.

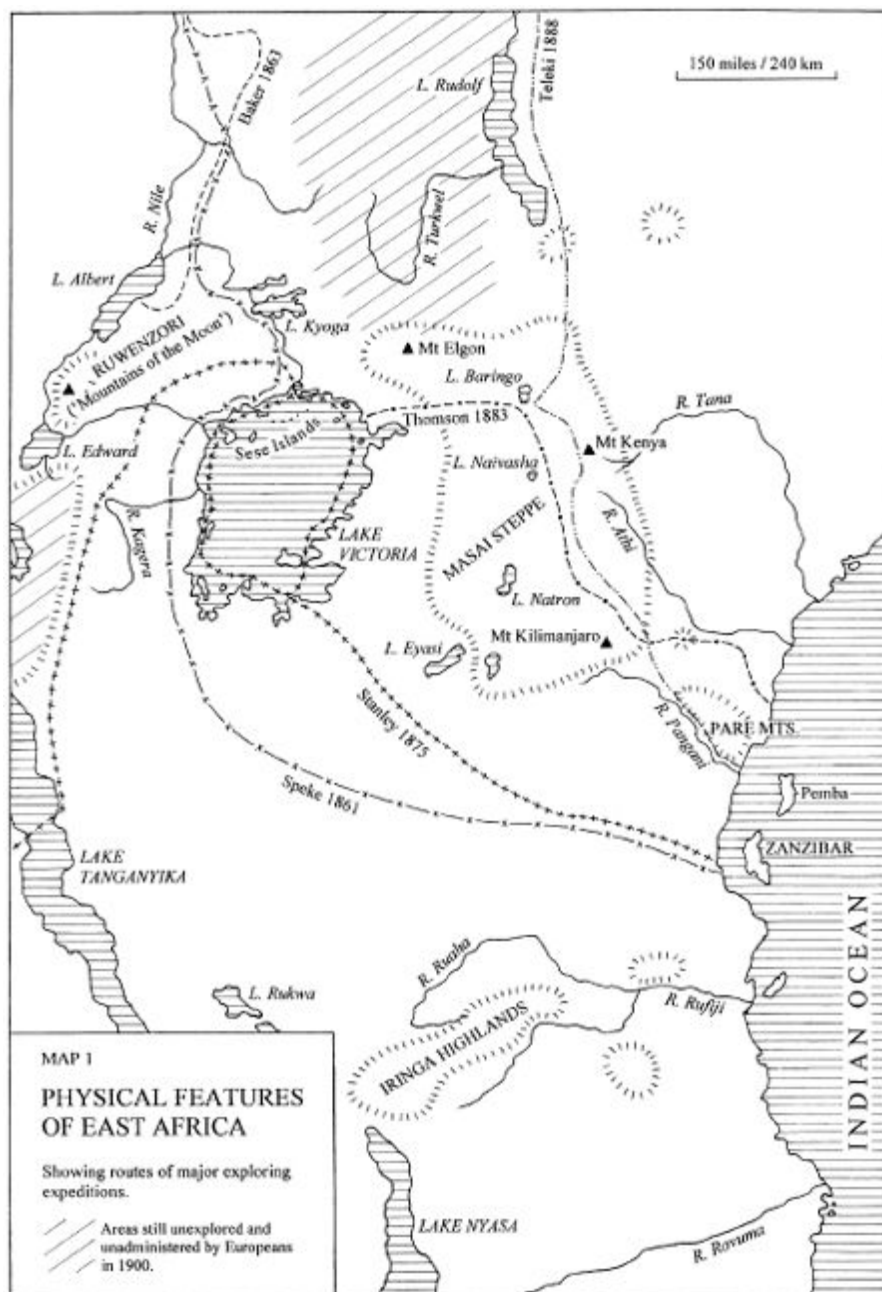
Africa was unique as a theatre of operations in several ways. The most obvious was the fact that in the 19th century — 400 years after its shores had first been circumnavigated — it still needed to be explored at all. Most of the coastal regions of tropical Africa were either arid and uninviting, or occupied by powerful native or Arab merchant states which actively discouraged outsiders from penetrating inland. Many parts of the world, such as Siberia and South America, had been opened up along their rivers, but in Africa virtually every river was blocked by huge rapids which made it impossible for boats to navigate them. And most significant of all, the continent was infested with a host of diseases which had earned the swampy coastal regions in particular the title of ‘the white man’s grave’. Malaria and other insect-borne fevers were especially deadly to Europeans before the widespread adoption of quinine from the 1830s onwards, and had caused the destruction of numerous expeditions. The situation gradually improved during the remainder of the century as more effective remedies were adopted, but disease continued to be a far more important cause of death among both Africans and whites than enemy action.

One factor of which contemporaries were largely unaware, despite its fundamental significance for the history of colonialism in Africa, should also be mentioned here. Beginning in the 1880s, the accelerated volume of traffic across the continent helped to spread diseases like sleeping sickness, which originated in West Africa, into the eastern regions. Smallpox, and a series of devastating cattle plagues, were probably also inadvertently spread by explorers. Then in the 1890s most of the world’s tropical regions were affected by

widespread drought and famine, of a severity which most tribes had not experienced for a century. These environmental catastrophes weakened many African societies — especially the traditional ones — both economically and psychologically, just at the time when they were under attack from outside. This must be borne in mind when attempting to understand why many tribes with a long-standing warlike reputation, such as the Masai, Ngoni, and Baganda, failed to put up the resistance to European occupation which might have been expected.

These adverse environmental factors combined to ensure that the armies which operated in East Africa (outside of the exceptionally densely populated and well organised kingdoms of what was to become Uganda) were very small by European standards. The other main reason for the small scale of African warfare was the impossibility of supplying large forces. Both food and water were scarce in many places, and the unpredictable climate did not permit local farmers to build up the sort of food reserves which might have been commandeered for the benefit of military expeditions. The missionary W.P. Johnson remarked in the 1880s on the strain which even a small peaceful caravan could place on local resources, since, even if it was prepared to pay its way, there would often be nothing to buy. Therefore a military or exploring expedition of a couple of hundred soldiers and a thousand porters would be a very large one indeed, and even lightly equipped native armies seldom exceeded 2 or 3,000. Arab slaving caravans might contain as many as 5,000 people on their return journey to the coast, but they solved the supply problem by simply not feeding the slaves, accepting a high rate of attrition in the process.

Having adapted over the course of millennia to these difficult conditions, African societies were often very alien to European visitors, and vice versa. The commonest native word for the white man in East Africa, *mzungu*, translates as something 'strange' or 'mysterious'. When, in the 20th century, anthropologists began to study native cultures more scientifically, they often discovered that their 19th-century predecessors had completely misunderstood important aspects, such as the powers and duties of the civil and ritual chiefs. Sometimes whole 'tribes' which had been confidently reported by the explorers — the 'Wakwavi' of East Africa and the 'Bangala' of the Congo, for example — were found never to have existed. In fact the word 'tribe' itself has quite rightly fallen into disfavour with modern scholars, who regard it as a meaningless and rather derogatory term covering a wide variety of different types of political organisation. Nevertheless, it has been retained here for convenience without any claim to have a precise meaning.



This is a work of 19th-century military history rather than anthropology, and the overwhelming majority of written sources derive from the European explorers and colonisers, so the treatment of African societies in this volume inevitably reflects their impressions. It is necessary to be aware, however, of how far their assumptions and

uncritically accepted stereotypes coloured their reports. They would often rank native peoples in a crude racial hierarchy based on aspects such as their skin colour or facial features. Such discussions have on the whole been ignored here as not only offensive but irrelevant, but these assumptions may well have inadvertently influenced accounts of more material subjects like military organisation. The findings of 20th-century anthropologists have therefore often been useful in explaining the sophisticated command systems and organisational principles which lay behind what eyewitnesses often present as no more than a horde of 'savages'.

In most cases the terminology used has been that of the 19th-century sources, if only because this will make it easier for the reader to refer to these sources. Visitors to East Africa almost always came by way of the coast, which was inhabited mainly by Swahili-speakers, and recruited their guides and porters from among the Swahili. They therefore tended to adopt Swahili terms for the other peoples whom they encountered. This language, like others of the so-called Bantu family, uses a system of prefixes to modify words, rather than the suffixes which we are used to in English. For example, an individual member of the Gogo tribe is a 'Mgogo', while the plural — referring either to a group of them or to the tribe as a whole — is 'Wagogo'. The country in which they live is 'Ugogo', and the language they speak is 'Kigogo'. Although the system is similar in the related languages which were spoken in most of the interior, the actual prefixes are sometimes different. Thus the people of the country which the Swahili called 'Uganda' — the land of the 'Waganda' — called themselves 'Baganda', the kingdom 'Buganda', and their language 'Luganda'. Bantu prefixes were often used even for peoples who spoke totally unrelated languages, and called themselves something entirely different: thus we encounter 'Wamasai' and 'Wanandi' — although never, for some reason, 'Umasai' for Masailand, or 'Wabari' for the Bari tribe.

The procedure adopted here has been to retain the Swahili 'U' prefixes for most of the tribal territories, as they generally have no other recognisable names, but to omit them in other cases where they might be confusing. Thus we refer to 'Ugogo' for the land, but to the 'Gogo' tribe rather than the 'Wagogo'. There are a number of exceptions. For example, 'Masailand' is used so universally in 19th-century sources that there is no point in substituting another version in an equally foreign language. Also, in order to minimise possible confusion, 'Bunyoro' and 'Buganda' have been used for the native kingdoms and 'Uganda' for the British Protectorate which later included them, even though explorers such as Speke and Stanley use the Swahili 'Uganda' to refer to the original Buganda kingdom. The

expressions 'Kenya' and 'Tanganyika' are a convenient shorthand, even though the former term did not come into use until the very end of the century, and the latter was seldom used precisely in the sense of the area later known by that name. Furthermore, as there was no generally accepted spelling for any African language in the 19th century, writers of this period use variants of even quite common names for people and places. When quoting from such sources, names have been retained in the original forms unless they are completely unrecognisable.

In most cases battles between Europeans and native tribes have been described in the chapters dealing with the appropriate tribes, as illustrations of the tactical methods which they favoured. One exception is the series of wars fought by the British and German colonial authorities against the Arabs and Swahilis of the coast in the 1880s and 1890s. The justification for this is that these campaigns tend, from the Arab point of view, to be a rather unedifying catalogue of defeats, and that they shed far more light on the organisations and tactics of the colonial forces than they do on those of the natives.

In conclusion I would like to express here my thanks to the series editor, Ian Heath, for his unfailing (though sorely tried) patience; to all those who have assisted with the research for this book; and especially to Mark Copplestone, who first rekindled my latent interest in the armies of Africa.

Chris Peers

December 2002

CONTENTS

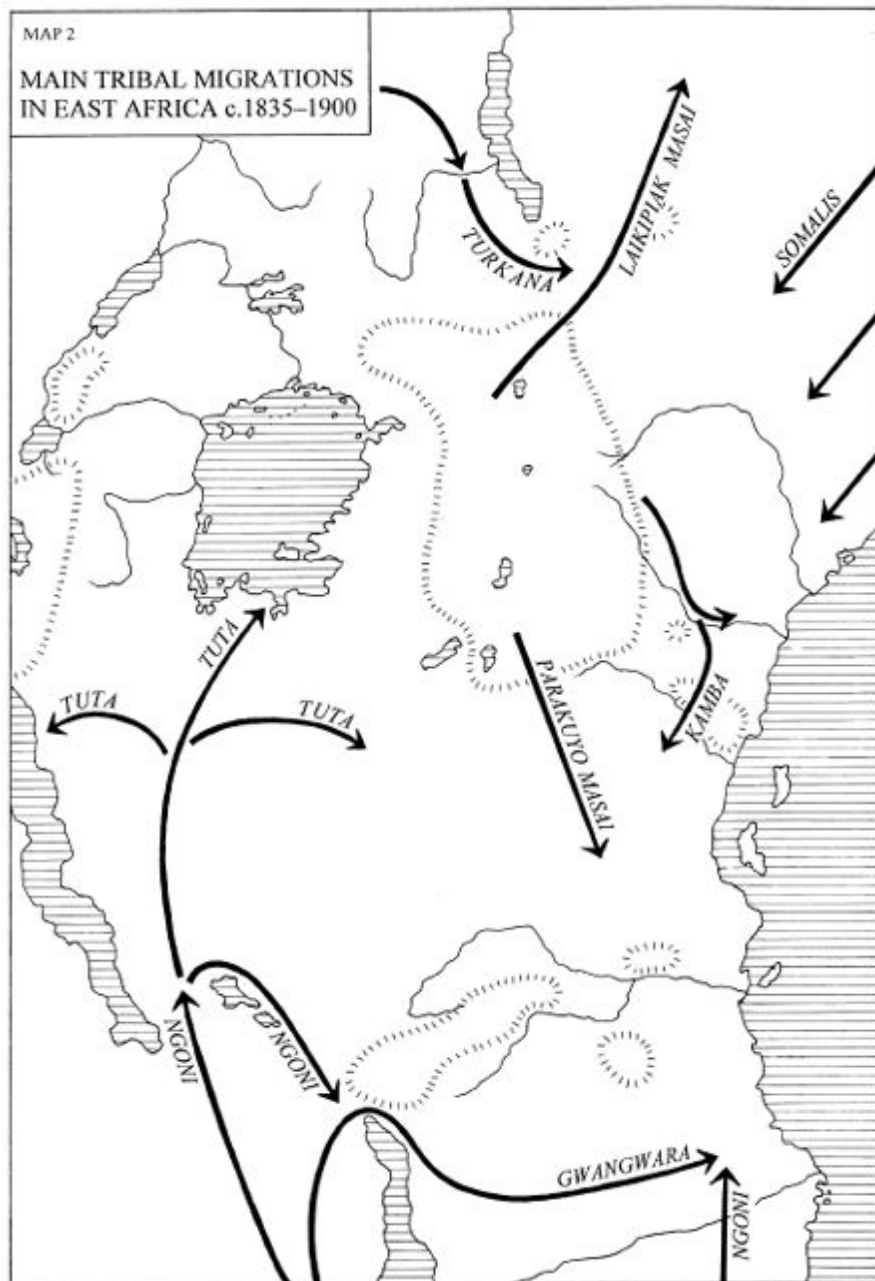
East Africa

The Upper Nile
Zanzibar and the Swahili Coast
Between the Coast and the Lakes
The Lake Kingdoms
The Northern Frontier
The Explorers
British East Africa
German East Africa
Bibliography

East Africa

MAP 2

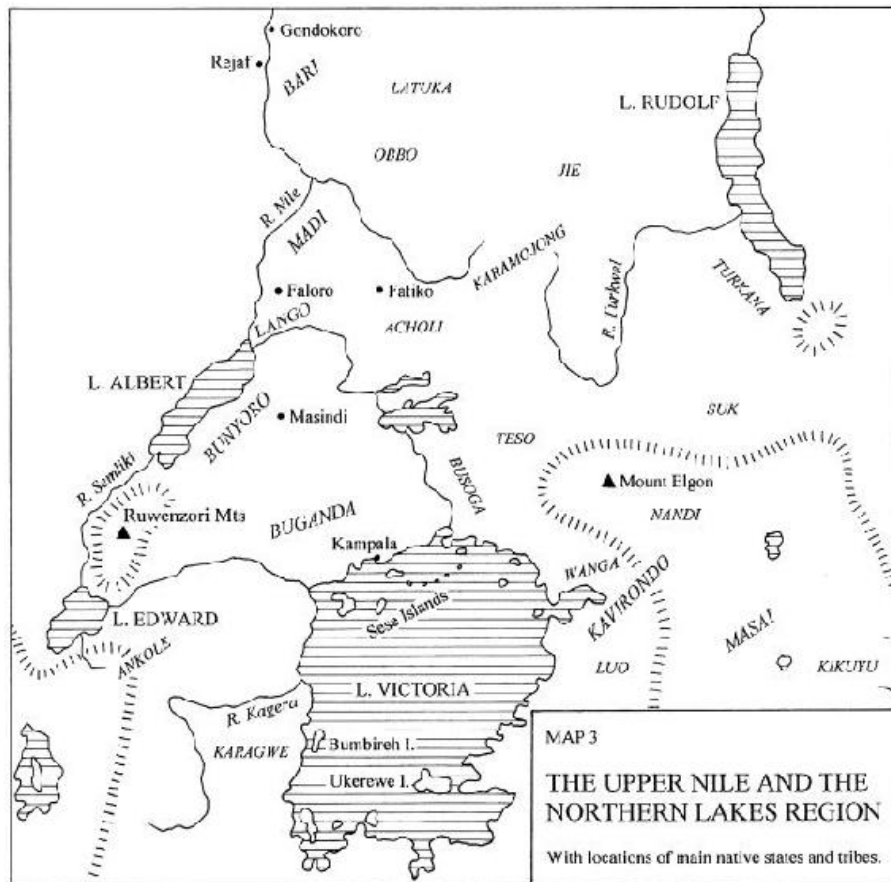
MAIN TRIBAL MIGRATIONS
IN EAST AFRICA c.1835–1900



THE UPPER NILE

Although only a few hundred miles upriver from the ancient civilisation of Egypt, the valley of the Upper Nile, south of the Sudd marshes, was never penetrated by outsiders until 1840, when a flotilla of boats sent by the Ottoman Viceroy of Egypt, Mehmet Ali, succeeded in finding a way through the treacherous swamps. During the previous 20 years the Egyptians had been steadily extending their power southwards at the expense of the Shaiqiyya and other inhabitants of the central Sudan, and laying the foundations for their own colonial empire based on the town of Khartoum, which they founded in about 1823. Economically, however, this Egyptian empire was unproductive, and it was only able to pay its way by ruthless plundering of the territories further south. 'Without the White Nile trade', says Samuel Baker, the first European explorer to describe the region in detail, 'Khartoum would almost cease to exist; and that trade is kidnapping and murder.' The victims of this trade were the tribes living between the Sudd marshes and the frontier of Bunyoro, the northernmost of the powerful centralised states which had grown up in the region around Lake Victoria.

The terrain of this vast battlefield varied dramatically, but certain of its distinctive features had their effect on military operations. On the flood plain of the Nile huge areas were covered with dense grass, which in the rainy season grew as high as 12 ft (3.7 m), and was intersected only by narrow animal tracks. This was a serious obstacle to movement as well as visibility, and was often used to conceal ambushes. When dry the grass burnt easily, and fire was used either to clear the dense growth and provide a field of fire, or by native warriors to create diversions and cause confusion in a marching caravan. Precipitous mountain ranges arose in various places from the edges of the plain, and in time of war the local tribes often fled into these with their cattle. The narrow passes, and the huge boulders which littered the mountainsides in profusion, provided another ideal terrain for ambushes. At least some of the native peoples were therefore able to fight back, despite the slavers' superiority in guns.



THE BARI

The Bari were a Nilotic tribe, distantly related to the Masai, who inhabited the Nile valley in the region of Gondokoro, practising a mixed agricultural and pastoral way of life. Before the arrival of the Arabs they had occupied an area measuring some 90 miles (145 km) from north to south and 70 miles (113 km) from east to west. Their main sub-tribes were the Shier on the east bank of the Nile, and the Maudari, Nyambara, and Bari proper on the west side. No useful estimate of their total numbers is available, but Samuel Baker reported that at the time of his first visit in 1863 the population was very dense, with villages often less than a mile apart. First contacted by the Egyptians in 1840, the Bari were initially friendly to outsiders. They welcomed an Austrian mission which was set up at Gondokoro in 1851, even though they showed no sign of converting to Christianity. During the 1850s, however, the depredations of the slavers from Khartoum gradually changed their attitude to one of hostility, so that by the time of Baker's arrival it had become dangerous to travel even

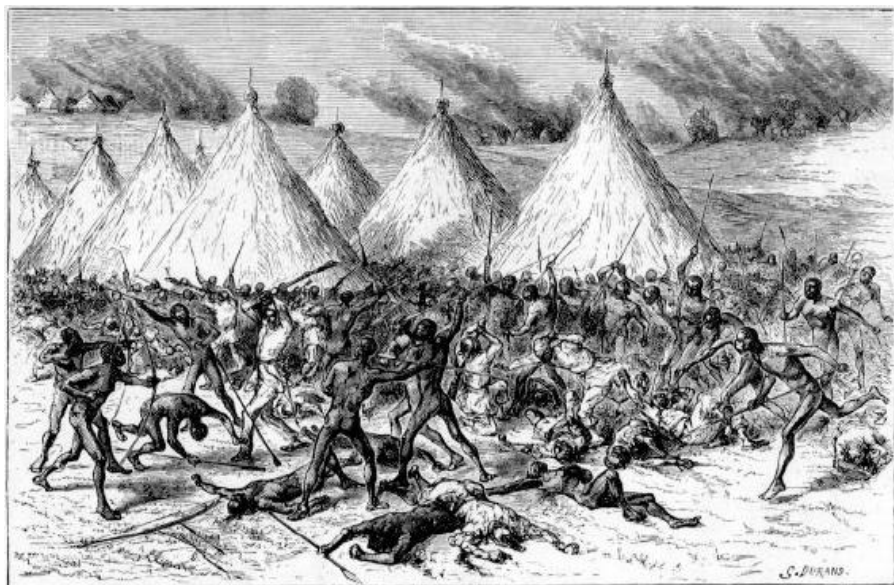
in the vicinity of Gondokoro without a strong escort. Harry Johnston later went so far as to claim that it was the Bari, and not the Nile swamps and rapids, that were the main obstacle to exploration of the river's source from the north. John Hanning Speke, who traversed the Bari country a few months before Baker, saw the tribe's warlike reputation in a rather different light. The Bari, he says, 'are denounced as barbarians by the Turks, because they will not submit to be bullied'.

In the 1870s the Egyptians tried repeatedly to subdue them, first under Baker, who was appointed by the Khedive in 1871 to annex the southern Sudan, and later under Charles Gordon, who took over as governor between 1874 and 1878. But by this time the Bari had become implacably opposed to any sort of contact with foreigners, rejecting even gifts and offers of trade. When the missionaries abandoned their station at Gondokoro in 1863 the local people systematically destroyed every trace of it, even grinding the bricks to powder to make body paint. Gordon recorded in his diary the demoralising effect of their repeated harangues directed at his camp from a safe distance: 'We do not want your beads; we do not want your cloth ... we want you to go away'.

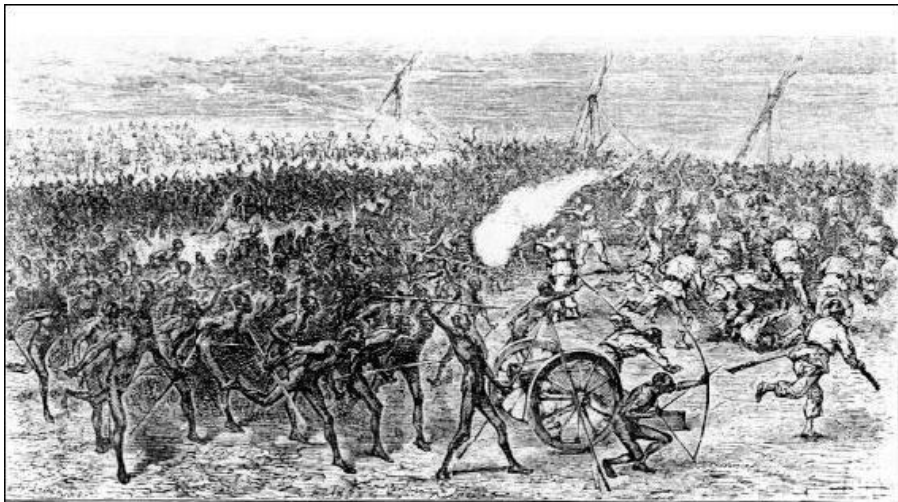
The Bari Wars, 1871–78

In 1871 Baker established a base at Gondokoro, and his Egyptian troops fought a series of small actions against the Bari, of which he recounts a handful in detail. In November, he and 18 of his elite Snider-armed bodyguard, known as the 'Forty Thieves', were intercepted in open country by 'immense numbers' of warriors. The Bari approached to within 600 yds (550 m), but kept out of effective range of the Sniders. Baker, who was riding one of the few horses to survive the tsetse flies, ordered his men to advance in open order without firing, as he feared that if they fired and missed they would encourage the enemy to lose their fear of the weapons. The Bari fell back in front of them for about a mile, confining themselves to threatening gestures, and leaping from side to side to make themselves more difficult targets. Only then, apparently, did Baker realise that they intended to lure him so far out on to the plain that he would be unable to get back to camp before nightfall. He therefore ordered a rapid retreat to the far side of a low ridge, where he found an abandoned village out of sight of the Bari army. There he set up an ambush of his own, but the enemy followed up cautiously, and instead of rushing into the trap they surrounded the village out of rifle range. However, a group eventually advanced to within 200 yds (180 m), and Baker himself shot their leader — recognisable by his large ivory

bracelets — with his double-barrelled hunting rifle. The Egyptians then charged out with the bayonet, and the surprised Bari fell back to 400 yds (365 m). Baker was nevertheless still in a very dangerous position, for darkness was approaching, but at the last moment a column of reinforcements arrived, having marched to the sound of the firing, and escorted his party back to camp.



Samuel Baker's Bari War of 1871–72 was extensively if rather naively illustrated by drawings in his book, based on sketches by Baker himself. This and other illustrations show the Bari having abandoned their distinctive feather plumes and other accoutrements for battle. (Samuel Baker, Ismailia, 1874)



The Bari attack on Baker's camp in January 1872, in which a mountain gun was temporarily captured by the tribesmen. The sails of the expedition's boats on the Nile can be seen in the background. (Samuel Baker, Ismailia, 1874)

Baker remarks that daylight operations were much easier on the west bank of the Nile, where the ground was flat and devoid of dense cover, than among the hills and tall grass on the eastern side. On several occasions in this open country he drove off large armies and captured their cattle herds, by charging with a few of his bodyguards mounted on his four or five surviving horses. He says that the Bari were afraid of horses, which they had not seen before, and recommends that cavalry should be deployed wherever possible; the animals would eventually fall sick and die, but in the meantime they would more than repay the trouble of transporting them upriver. Mountain artillery was also useful in overawing the enemy, but could seldom be deployed in the field because of the terrain; it might require as many as 30 men to haul an 8¼-pdr gun over the primitive muddy tracks.

Baker's most successful operation was the pacification of Belinian, a large group of villages clustered around the mountain of the same name. This operation took 35 days of continuous fighting. Each village had to be stormed at the point of the bayonet — a tactic which usually demoralised the Baris — and then garrisoned. A chain of posts was then set up at 100-yard (90 m) intervals for several miles along the bank of the Nile, each holding either two men with Sniders, or three with muskets. These little groups were able to stay undetected long enough to turn the tables and ambush a number of war parties which were moving into position to set up ambushes of their own, after which the Bari temporarily abandoned the area.

Night attacks on the Egyptian bases continued, however, and

on several occasions their garrisons were only saved by the thorn fences or earth ramparts which they had erected around their camps. The most serious incident of this type was an assault on a garrison of 120 Egyptians whom Baker had left at Rejaf in January 1872, under the command of a Major Abdullah. The Bari charged from very close range, and the camp was only held because a barrier of thorn branches delayed the attackers just long enough to enable the defenders to form up and open fire. But the garrison's sole artillery piece — an 8¼-pdr mountain gun — missed fire and was captured, the crew either fleeing or being speared. The tribesmen did not understand how the gun worked, so they failed to put it out of action, and it was soon recaptured by an Egyptian counter-attack. The Bari then withdrew, but maintained the siege of the camp until a party of 50 men sent back by Baker appeared in their rear and drove them off.

By Gordon's time the Bari had learned not to congregate in the open closer than 1,500 yds (1.4 km) to a fort, but they continued to cut off and destroy small detachments of troops. Gordon's deputy Linant de Bellefonds, sent on a patrol with 41 soldiers, was ambushed and speared to death in August 1875, only four of his men escaping. Gordon eventually gave up hope of ever pacifying the Bari and retired in despair, blaming the poor quality of the Egyptian soldiers for his failure.

The Egyptians lost control of the Gondokoro region to the Mahdists early in the 1880s. No detailed account exists of the tribe's struggle against this new enemy, but when the British established themselves in the southern Sudan in 1898, after the Battle of Omdurman, they found that the inhabitants had been almost wiped out by the better armed Mahdists, who had been as enthusiastic raiders for slaves and cattle as their predecessors. The Bari had survived only as refugees, either in the mountains or on islands in the Nile.

Organisation and tactics

As in the case of other Nilotic peoples (for whom see the chapter on the Northern Frontier), Bari men were organised into age-sets, formed from those who underwent initiation as warriors at the same time. Unlike those of more 'typical' Nilotic tribes, however, these seem to have had little military significance. Each village had its own age-sets, but they did not combine with their neighbours to form larger age-based 'regiments'. Instead, the basis of their military organisation was by extended families or clans, known as *dungesi*. Twentieth-century anthropologists found that some such units comprised as many as 700 adult males, but that most were far smaller; nearly 100 of the *dungesi*

which were recorded had fewer than 20 warriors each. Of course, units may have been bigger before the depopulation caused by Arab raids in the late 19th century, but the Bari never seem to have deployed large armies under a unified command. Village headmen, rainmakers, and the elders of the clans served as war leaders, but their precise roles are not recorded, if in fact there was any formal military hierarchy at all.

Gordon describes the internal wars of the Bari as ‘very harmless affairs’, but contrasts this with their ‘courageous and warlike’ resistance to outsiders. According to Baker, the warriors were ‘the most warlike in Central Africa’. They fought with bows, shooting ‘fiendishly barbed’ poisoned arrows, and with spears, which they used mainly as throwing weapons. With the latter, Baker claims, they could hit massed targets at up to 60 yds (55 m), and individuals at up to 40 yds (36 m). Iron was very scarce in the region, so spears and arrows were often tipped with hard wood. Baker says that they were extremely proficient with these weapons, having practised with them from childhood. Even in pitched battles they favoured skirmishing tactics, constantly leaping from side to side to make themselves a more difficult target, and relying on speed of movement to avoid enemy missiles. They did not carry shields, believing that the extra weight would slow them down.

During the war of 1871, the Egyptian troops suffered considerably from the enemy’s skill in night attacks. The Bari would first send out scouts, who crawled on hands and knees until close to the enemy encampment, carefully observing the movements of the sentries. As the local tribes never killed women under any circumstances, they were often sent into an enemy village as spies. When the signal was given the whole force would advance, also crawling, and in complete silence until the last moment, when they would all charge at once with fierce yells. Gordon reports very similar tactics in use four years later: ‘They showed (at least, some of them did) great courage. They came up to me, creeping on their stomachs, to within ninety yards, in spite of a shower of bullets. When they see the soldier loading, they run a bit; and when they see him ready to fire, they are on their stomachs quite flat, and very difficult to hit.’ Echoing Baker’s opinion, he adds that ‘double-barrelled guns with slugs are better than bullets against them’.

Baker was obviously drawing on his experiences with the Bari when he delivered his lecture on ‘Experience of Savage Warfare’ to the Royal United Services Institution in 1873, although he does not mention the tribe by name in this passage. ‘Native warfare’, he says, ‘is conducted upon the principle of “surprise”, always allied with treachery. They will employ false guides or interpreters, who having

gained the confidence of their European enemy, will lead the troops into an ambushade. Ever watchful, the natives spy out the movements of troops from the tops of trees ... Should a lack of discipline permit, stragglers will assuredly be cut off, or sentries stolen upon, and killed by a lance or arrow in the backs.' Another trick used in the dry season was to set fire to the tall grass which covered much of the country. Baker argues that this was not very dangerous in itself, as the flames never travelled at more than 6 miles (9.6 km) an hour, so that there would usually be time to escape or cut firebreaks, but it could easily cause confusion or panic. On one occasion a Turkish slaving party of 103 men was ambushed and annihilated while distracted by a localised grass fire. Baker goes on to say that whole parties of slavers were often overrun and destroyed by such surprise attacks. For example, a Piedmontese trader named Vaudet — perhaps the first European victim of the Bari — was killed when his caravan was overrun near Gondokoro in 1859.

In pitched battles in the open in daylight the Bari were less successful, and although in the early campaigns at least they frequently attempted to come to close quarters and engage in a firefight, they seldom got close enough to inflict casualties. A day's fighting in 1865 between Baker's column and a force of Bari archers resulted in no casualties on either side. Baker nevertheless considered that they would have made good regular soldiers if properly trained, and quotes several instances of the heroism of Bari slaves fighting alongside their Arab masters. In one case a youth rescued the army's flag after its bearer was killed by the Madi, while in another a drummer boy saved his master and drove off a group of tribesmen by pointing at them with his drumstick, which they mistook for a gun.

By 1871 the Bari of Belinian already possessed several hundred muskets captured from the Turks, but they do not seem to have been used in battle on a significant scale, probably because of a lack of ammunition. On his return from Bunyoro in 1872 Baker was concerned to find that other Bari groups had acquired some muskets from Egyptian deserters, and were using them to snipe at the garrison of Gondokoro. Three years later the Bari captured 33 Snider and Remington rifles from de Bellefonds' patrol, which caused Gordon considerable alarm, but in fact they never used these weapons against him, again because of their inability to acquire enough ammunition.



A Bari arrowhead. According to Baker these missiles, 'barbed with diabolical ingenuity', were thickly coated with poison and fixed into a socket in the reed shaft in such a way that they would remain in a wound after the arrow was withdrawn. He gives several descriptions of the gruesome effects of the poison which — even if the victim survived — would eventually cause an affected limb to mortify and drop off. (After Baker)

THE LOTUKA

The Lotuka are also referred to as Latooka or Lotuxo (the usage adopted here is that recommended by Harry Johnston). They were another Nilotic people, who inhabited the mountains south-east of the Bari country, and before the incursions of the slavers they were famous for their wealth in cattle. A neighbouring tribe, the Akkara, who lived on the River Sobat about 50 miles (80 km) east of Lotuka, were described by Baker's Lotuka informants as dangerous enemies who fought mounted on mules. Because of this the Lotuka had often been beaten by them, although they considered themselves superior to all the local foot-fighting tribes. Mounted warriors were otherwise unknown on the Upper Nile, so Baker conjectured that these Akkara were Gallas from Abyssinia, and went on to speculate — without much evidence — that the Lotuka themselves were descended from an earlier wave of Galla conquerors.

The first Turkish expeditions appear to have arrived among the Lotuka only a year before Baker did (i.e., in 1862), and during the 1860s the tribe was divided about how best to deal with them. Some groups resisted, but others joined with the Turks to victimise other tribes, or even enlisted the newcomers as allies in wars against other Lotuka settlements. On several occasions they defeated the Turks in battle, but over the next two decades they gradually lost a large part of their cattle herds in the continual raids and civil wars. By the

1880s, according to Emin Pasha, they had few cattle left, and were forced to eke out a living as hunters. Johnston, writing in 1903, confirms that the Lotuka were then impoverished, but although a few had become Muslims, most continued to follow their traditional way of life.

The Battle of Latome, April 1863

In April 1863 an army of 110 musket-armed Turks — who included many deserters from Baker's expedition — along with 300 native allies, set out from their camp at Latome to attack a cluster of Lotuka villages in the mountains. They sacked one village and carried off numerous slaves, then proceeded further into the hills through a narrow pass and drove off a herd of cows. Baker remarks that the Lotuka had not fought to protect their wives and children, but were induced to make a stand by the threat to their cattle. As the Turks retired down the pass, the warriors closed in behind them and drove them along in disorder, showering them with stones and spears from behind the large rocks which littered the mountain slopes. Unable to see any targets for their guns, the Turks panicked and took a wrong turning, which led them to the top of a 500-foot (150 m) high precipice. The Lotuka seized their advantage and rushed the enemy, who were either speared or literally pushed over the edge. About 100 of the native allies — perhaps aided by their better knowledge of the country — escaped, but the rest of the Turkish army was annihilated. Baker adds that this victory caused the Lotuka, who had previously been wary of firearms, to regard them with contempt.

Organisation and tactics

The Lotuka warriors, like the Bari, were divided into age-sets, which in this case seem to have fought together as military units. The people as a whole were organised into a number of districts or 'rain areas', each under the jurisdiction of a rainmaker or *hobu*, whose power was based on his supposed ability to control the weather. J.F. Cunningham, writing in 1905, says that there were three of these divisions, but some sources describe up to nine. The rainmakers were responsible for initiating the warriors of each new age-set, and for awarding honours to those who distinguished themselves in battle, but they shared their authority with other chiefs whose role was more strictly military. For instance, at the town of Tarrangolle, which Baker visited in 1863, he found two chiefs, who were said to be brothers. One, Moy, was 'the greater in point of rank' and may in fact have been a *hobu*, but it was the other, Commoro, who led the warriors into battle.

The Lotuka fought with spears, which were mainly intended as close combat weapons, although Baker describes them as being thrown from behind rocks in the fight at Latome. The mountains of the Lotuka country were littered with stones and boulders of all sizes, and we often hear of men throwing stones at their attackers, while the larger boulders could be rolled down a slope on to their enemies. Baker also relates how, at the siege of the town of Kayala by a combined Lotuka and Turkish army, the defending Lotuka women fought alongside the men, and suffered many casualties. They smashed up their grindstones and used the pieces as missiles, and the explorer was later shown musket barrels which had been dented by the force of these projectiles.

Tarrangolle, which was the chief settlement of the group with which Baker stayed on his first expedition to the region, was probably typical of the extensive towns which the Lotuka built during their heyday. It contained about 3,000 thatched houses, each protected by its own stockade. The entire town, which also incorporated numerous kraals for the cattle, was surrounded by an iron-wood palisade including tall, three-tiered watch-towers, and gates which were blocked at night by thorn bushes. This iron-wood was so hard that Baker describes Turkish bullets flattening harmlessly against it. The Lotuka were very possessive of their cattle, and so were constantly on their guard against attacks by rustlers from the neighbouring tribes. For this reason all the alleyways inside the town, except the broad main street, were deliberately made just wide enough for one cow to pass through. Thus an enemy who did manage to get in would not be able to drive off the herds before the defenders could be mobilised. Each town possessed a great war drum, which was sounded to give warning of an attack, or to summon the warriors to battle. The war-signal was three slow beats, repeated at intervals. This would be taken up by other Lotuka settlements within earshot, and so passed quickly throughout the country, as Baker witnessed during a threatened attack on him and his Turkish associates in 1863.

THE MADI

‘Madi’ was the name given by the Arabs to a group of related tribes dwelling south of Gondokoro who spoke a common language. They also included the Moru, who lived on the west bank of the Nile. Most of these tribes had no contact with either Arabs or Europeans until the beginning of the 1860s, but before the end of that decade they had already been fatally weakened by the slave-raiders. Not only did the Madi comprise several different ethnic groups, but even within many of these there was little or no unity. Furthermore, no two

neighbouring tribes ever seemed to be at peace with each other. This situation was, of course, exploited by the slavers, who recruited the Madi as allies against each other, and by 1864 much of the Madi territory along the Nile had already been reduced to ruin. Two years earlier J.H. Speke had been surprised to see that the people seldom resisted the oppression of the Turks, but instead simply knocked down their huts and moved their villages to less accessible areas.

The Battle of Faloro, 1864

The Madi were not always helpless victims, however. Baker describes a fight in 1864 in which Werdella, the chief of the village of Faloro, defeated a 300-strong Turkish army virtually single-handed. Werdella had been an ally of the Turks until their depredations against his people became intolerable, and had acquired from them two muskets and a brace of pistols, as well as training in how to use them. When he learned that two columns of Turks were on their way to attack him he drew up his warriors on a nearby mountain, having first sent agents into the enemy camp to steal a box of cartridges and a supply of percussion caps.

The Turks split into two columns of 150 men each, and ascended the mountain from opposite sides. One group was ambushed half way to the top by a Madi war party shooting from the shelter of rocks. While the Madi rank and file discharged their arrows ineffectively, Werdella killed three of the enemy — including their standard-bearer — with his first three shots. A group of Arab elephant hunters ran forward and saved the flag, but the rest of the attackers, who had never before faced an enemy equipped with firearms, fled down the mountain. They then rallied and rejoined the other party, where a debate took place about whether to advance or retreat in the face of this unexpected firepower. But Werdella had already taken up another position in front of the second column and opened fire while they were still hesitating, killing another two men with just two bullets. At that point, still apparently not realising that all the damage had been done by one man, the Turks retired to their camp. Their leader later described the action to Baker, who unsympathetically responded that Werdella ‘deserved the Victoria Cross’!

Traditional Madi weapons were spears and bows, with some groups favouring one more than the other, but regardless of the weapons used it seems that they generally fought as skirmishers, advancing swiftly to discharge their missiles, while leaping from side to side to make themselves more difficult targets. The missionary R.W. Felkin says that Moru children — girls as well as boys — were taught from an early age to dodge arrows. These tactics, of course, were of

little use against guns, whose bullets could not be seen coming. Some groups obtained a limited number of muskets from the Turks, but even in the 1880s there were no firearms in the Moru country, although according to Felkin Arab influence was by then rapidly destroying the traditional customs of the tribe.

THE ACHOLI

The Acholi lived to the south of the Madi, between them and the northern frontier of Bunyoro. Speke refers to them as Gani, and they also included the Obbo and Lira sections discovered by Baker in 1863. Many Acholi groups were at least nominally subject to the king of Bunyoro, and provided manpower for his armies. The Acholi were a mixture of local people and migrants from the north related to the Lango and the Luo of Lake Victoria, who had passed through the region on their migration from the Sudan several centuries previously. They were divided into between 20 and 30 independent groups, each led by a chief known by the Luo title of *rwot*. Their first contact with Europeans was in 1860, when the Italian explorer Giovanni Miani arrived in search of the source of the Nile. Two years later the Turkish slavers appeared, and over the next decade the Acholi — like most of their neighbours — lost virtually all of their cattle. As in the case of the Lotuka and the Madi, Acholi warriors often joined the slavers in their attacks on neighbouring villages. In 1863, for example, Baker witnessed the departure of a slaving expedition against the Madi which contained 120 armed Turks and ‘a mass of Obbo people’. The Obbo chief, Katchiba, knew that this would result in trouble because his neighbours would wait until the Turks had left and then retaliate against him, but he was powerless to prevent it.

During the 1870s the Acholi were generally friendly to the Egyptians who then occupied much of their country, but in 1885 King Kabarega of Bunyoro incited them to revolt against Emin Pasha, who was holding out in the area on behalf of the Khedive of Egypt after the Mahdists had cut him off from the Sudan. Acholi warriors besieged the Egyptian fort at Fatiko until it was relieved by Emin Pasha in 1887, and later in the same year Kabarega recruited many Acholi, led by a chief called Awic, into an army intended to attack the Egyptians again. In 1888 A.J. Mounteney-Jephson, accompanying Stanley's expedition to relieve Emin Pasha, found the Acholi surprisingly hostile to the Khedive's troops and ‘ready to join anyone’ who would fight them. Soon afterwards many of them even joined forces with a Mahdist army under Tafa Mahomet to attack an Egyptian column. In the following year, after Emin Pasha had been persuaded to return to the coast with Stanley, the Egyptian garrisons evacuated Acholi

territory, leaving it to its own devices. The next foreign army to arrive was a British expedition under Colonel Macdonald in 1899, which brought the country more or less peacefully under British control.

One Acholi clan or family, the Payera, was recognised as senior to the others, but even they possessed little real power. Emin Pasha described the Payera chief Rwothchamma, whom he met in 1880, as having ‘absolutely no authority over his people’. Among the Lira, Baker says that each small district was under the control of a petty chief. On the death of a chief, his sons and others invariably fought among themselves for the succession, and it was unusual for the chieftainship to remain in a family for more than one or two generations. In Obbo, however, Baker found that the old *rwot* Katchiba was in the process of establishing a more permanent power base. He controlled a number of villages, appointing his sons as headmen, and was ‘much respected’ in the country, apparently because of his supposed skill as a rainmaker. A *rwot* did not usually fight but appointed a relative as war chief, or *oteka lawii mony*. When firearms became common during the 1880s, however, many of the *rwots* began to surround themselves with gun-armed bodyguards.

THE KARAMOJONG

The Karamojong, like the closely related Jie, Dodoth, Suk, and Turkana, came originally from the Kotem-Magos Plateau, north of Mount Elgon. This was the principal homeland from which they and other so-called Plains Nilotes had radiated outwards during the 18th century. The Karamojong probably separated from the Jie and Turkana around 1720. By the 19th century they and a number of related groups had occupied a stretch of dry, hilly country south of Kotem-Magos and west of Lake Rudolf, living on the tops of the ridges which flanked the few watercourses. They engaged in limited agriculture, but the arid climate of what was to become known as Karamoja was not very suitable for crops, and so they relied mainly on their cattle. The young warriors spent most of their time in nomadic stock camps, driving the herds around the country in search of grazing. This was the chief motivation behind Karamojong warfare, as they were often obliged to move on to grazing grounds claimed by neighbouring tribes.

Karamoja had once been inhabited by the Oropom people, who may have been a branch of the Masai. They were skilled ironworkers, but unlike their Masai relatives they seem to have been unable to stand up to the newcomers in battle. Karamojong traditions record a succession of victories culminating in a final battle in about 1825, when the Oropom — in desperation — tied themselves together with

cowhide ropes to make retreat impossible. This did not save them, and they were utterly defeated and dispersed. The Oropom campaigns saw the most intensive fighting of the Karamojong migration, after which their territorial expansion ceased and they settled down to sporadic raiding of their neighbours for cattle. For much of the 19th century the Bokora clan of the Karamojong was occupied against the Jie, while at the same time other groups were raiding the Turkana and the Suk.

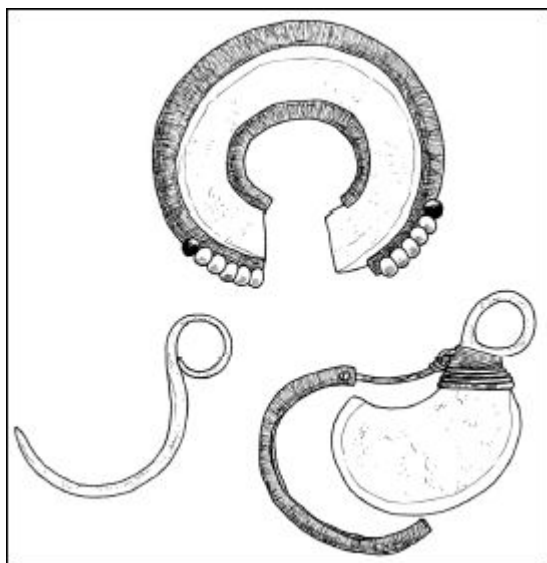
The first outsiders to arrive in Karamoja were Galla and Swahili elephant hunters during the 1880s. They introduced a few guns, as well as human and livestock diseases which weakened the local tribes, but trade was on a very small scale and did not lead to any change in methods of warfare until the beginning of the 20th century. The people's first contact with Europeans came as late as 1897, when Major Macdonald's column from Uganda passed through in pursuit of Sudanese rebels. The Karamojong did not resist, but allowed the British to purchase supplies, although their warriors made sufficient impression on Macdonald for him to describe them as 'the best fighters in Equatoria'. British policy at this time was to avoid conflict with the 'wilder tribes' of the region, so the Karamojong remained independent until the establishment of British administration in 1916, and despite their warlike reputation they never clashed seriously with the whites.

Organisation and tactics

The Karamojong, like most of the cattle-herding peoples of this region, had little in the way of political or military organisation. They were divided into clans, which consisted simply of the occupants of a particular ridge, loosely controlled by councils of elders. More important from a military point of view was the age-set system, similar to that of other Nilotic peoples, which divided the male population into two major 'generations' — warriors and elders. All the men who were initiated as warriors within the same five or six year period formed an age-set, of which five made up a generation. It is not clear to what extent these age-sets served as military units: oral tradition suggests that 19th-century Karamojong armies fought as a disorderly mob, with no formal division into units and no proper system of command. The elders exercised a form of authority over the warriors by their power to bless or curse their raiding parties before they set off, but otherwise had no direct military role. There were warriors known as 'fierce men', who rose to prominence because of their fighting prowess, but they had no real authority over other individuals, who were free to follow any leader they chose. Karamojong armies, like those of the Jie, were often accompanied by

boys too young to fight, who carried supplies of water and helped to drive off any captured cattle.

No accurate data is available on the size of 19th-century armies, but in 1911 the total number of warriors in Karamoja was estimated at 6,000. The Dodoth, who often fought alongside the Karamojong, could field another 4,000. The population was presumably larger before the smallpox epidemic of the early 1890s, but as their clans were never united Karamojong armies were probably never stronger than 4 or 5,000. Because contact with Europeans was so limited, we have few contemporary descriptions of Karamojong methods of fighting. Battle formations were open and flexible, with the emphasis on fighting at a distance, evading the enemy's missiles with dodging and bobbing movements. These movements were taught and practised by means of war dances, and young boys also practised for war by throwing spears at a rolling hoop. W.D.M. 'Karamoja' Bell, who visited the country in the first decade of the 20th century, says the Karamojong were 'then at the most dangerous stage of ignorance with regard to firearms ... they all firmly held the conviction that all you had to do to avoid being struck by the bullet was to duck when you saw the smoke.'



Finger and wrist-knives and iron finger-hook, designed for hand-to-hand combat. All these examples are from the Karamojong tribe, but the Lotuka, Turkana, and others used similar weapons.

A distinctive custom among the Karamojong and related tribes was the adoption by each warrior of a 'name ox'. This was a favourite animal selected from the warrior's herd, whose horns were trained into a distinctive shape, and into whose ears a notch was cut

whenever its owner killed an enemy. The warrior would shout the name of his ox as a war cry, and would identify himself, and taunt the enemy in battle, by mimicking the shape of its horns with his hands as a sort of improvised heraldic sign. This was, of course, only possible in the skirmishing style of warfare adopted against similarly equipped opposition — hence the complaint of the Karamojong that at one battle against Acholi musketeers, ‘a man did not have time to make the shape of his ox’s horns with his hands before he was shot down’. The Karamojong themselves never acquired many firearms, but those who did get them often rose to prominence as war leaders as a result. In the 1890s, for example, Chief Nakinei of the Bokora clan owed his position at least partly to the fact that he owned a musket.

THE JIE

The Jie were closely related to the Karamojong. In fact the latter dismissed them as merely the descendants of Karamojong outlaws who had run off with their fathers’ cattle. In reality they were probably a mixture of refugees from several different groups. They first came together around the 1720s, but they did not develop a strong sense of identity until the early 19th century, when the rise of a class of ritual fire-makers strengthened their cohesion in the face of external threats. They were originally known as the Ngiro, but after the wars of the 1860s they proudly adopted the nickname given to them by their Karamojong enemies — *ngijie*, or ‘the fighting people’. They lived mainly by farming and hunting. Cattle were important culturally as well as economically, but unlike most Nilotic pastoralists the Jie did not despise farmers, and often incorporated groups of them into the tribe. Despite their very small numbers — they probably never had more than 1,500 warriors, and few of their armies exceeded 500 men — the Jie deserve attention because of their extraordinary success in wars against far more numerous enemies. Furthermore, towards the end of the 19th century they produced a leader who bears comparison, albeit on a smaller scale, with any of the better-known African war chiefs.

The wars of the 19th century

The early part of the century was remembered as a peaceful age, when people allegedly fought only with whips. At some stage, however, the Jie acquired superior iron spears from their neighbours, the Labwor, who were noted smiths, and this may have been a factor in their later success. The first recorded war in which the Jie were engaged took place around 1830, when another neighbouring tribe, the Poet, invaded the district of Rengen. The Rengen warriors were defeated at

first, but later counter-attacked with the aid of the neighbouring district of Ngikorwakol. The Poet were crushed, and many of them were absorbed into the ranks of the Jie.

By mid-century both the human and cattle populations were increasing, and the Jie, Karamojong, and Dodoth all came into conflict over the increasingly scarce pastureland. As the Jie were greatly outnumbered by their rivals, they were forced to rely increasingly on their individual prowess as warriors. About 1860 a great battle was fought between the Jie of Ngikorwakol and the Bokora clan of the Karamojong, who were so confident of success that they had brought along a huge herd of cattle to feed on the Jie crops. The fight was very chaotic — afterwards it was referred to as the Battle of Nangodiai, which means ‘to mix people up together’ — but after a long day of fighting the Bokora were beaten, and most of their cattle captured. But while the Ngikorwakol were occupied with the Bokora invasion, the Dodoth launched a series of small raids against Rengen from the north. Then the rest of the Karamojong joined in the war and defeated the Jie at the village of Lokibuwo, where the Ngikorwakol war leader, Acuka, was killed.

Tribal tradition tells of how the Jie now seemed to be facing annihilation at the hands of their far more numerous enemies. The Karamojong advanced northwards to link up with the Dodoth, forming a line of warriors several miles long, which burnt and killed everything in its path. In the course of a single day’s fighting the Ngikorwakol were driven out of their lands altogether, but with the help of reinforcements from Rengen they managed to form a line along the banks of the Lokwakel River. A party of Karamojong crossed the river at a ford, but was counter-attacked and wiped out by the defenders. The invaders then withdrew, driving away most of the Jie cattle but leaving the tribe’s military power unbroken.

Realising that the end of the invasion was only a respite, the Jie regrouped their scattered villages into much larger towns, each occupied by several clans and protected by a solid wooden palisade. They also encouraged refugees from the Acholi, Dodoth and other neighbouring tribes to join them and augment their numbers. In about 1880 the Galla and Swahili elephant hunters arrived in the country. The Jie were not interested in trading, although relations were generally friendly. But it was the hunters who brought the epidemics which weakened both the Jie and their enemies, and temporarily brought an end to the fighting.

By the middle of the 1890s, both sides had recovered sufficiently to resume their feuds. First the Dodoth attacked the Jie, but they were massacred at the Battle of Tiira after being trapped between the defenders of a river line and another Jie raiding party

which happened to be in the area and had rushed to the sound of the fighting. It was after this battle that the greatest of the Jie war chiefs, Loriang, first came to prominence. He was the son of the chief Acuka who had been killed at Lokibuwo, and he had himself escaped as a fugitive from that battle as a boy. He now inherited the position of war leader of the Ngikorwakol, and began to put into effect the military reforms which are discussed below.

The Battle of Caicaon, c.1900

The Battle of Caicaon took place around the end of the 19th century, and was both the first test of Loriang's reforms, and the greatest victory in the history of the 'fighting people'. The Acholi had profited by acting as middlemen in the arms trade between the east coast and Bunyoro, and had acquired large numbers of muskets from traders at a time when their neighbours still had few or none. They therefore decided to exploit their temporary advantage by destroying the Jie. Two thousand Acholi warriors led by six chiefs launched a dawn attack on the settlement of Caicaon in Rengen, which was defended only by a small band of Jie spearmen. Luckily for the Jie a rainstorm made many of the Acholi muskets useless, and the attack was stalled for an hour or so, despite the enemy's great superiority in numbers. This short respite was enough to allow Loriang's new mobilisation system to start bringing contingents to the scene from the Ngikorwakol villages. Even after they had arrived the Jie were still outnumbered, according to their own accounts, by four to one, but they nevertheless went over to the offensive, driving the Acholi from the field and destroying them in a vigorous pursuit.

The Jie captured many of the Acholi muskets, but such was their confidence in their own tactics that very few of the warriors put them to use. The Rengen also recognised the advantages of Loriang's reforms, and accepted his overlordship. Both districts went on under his command to inflict decisive defeats on the Karamojong and Dodoth, and to incorporate many of the defeated Acholi into their forces. The Jie then embarked on a series of equally successful campaigns against all the other surrounding tribes which only began to subside in 1910, just a year before the arrival of the British administration.

Organisation and tactics

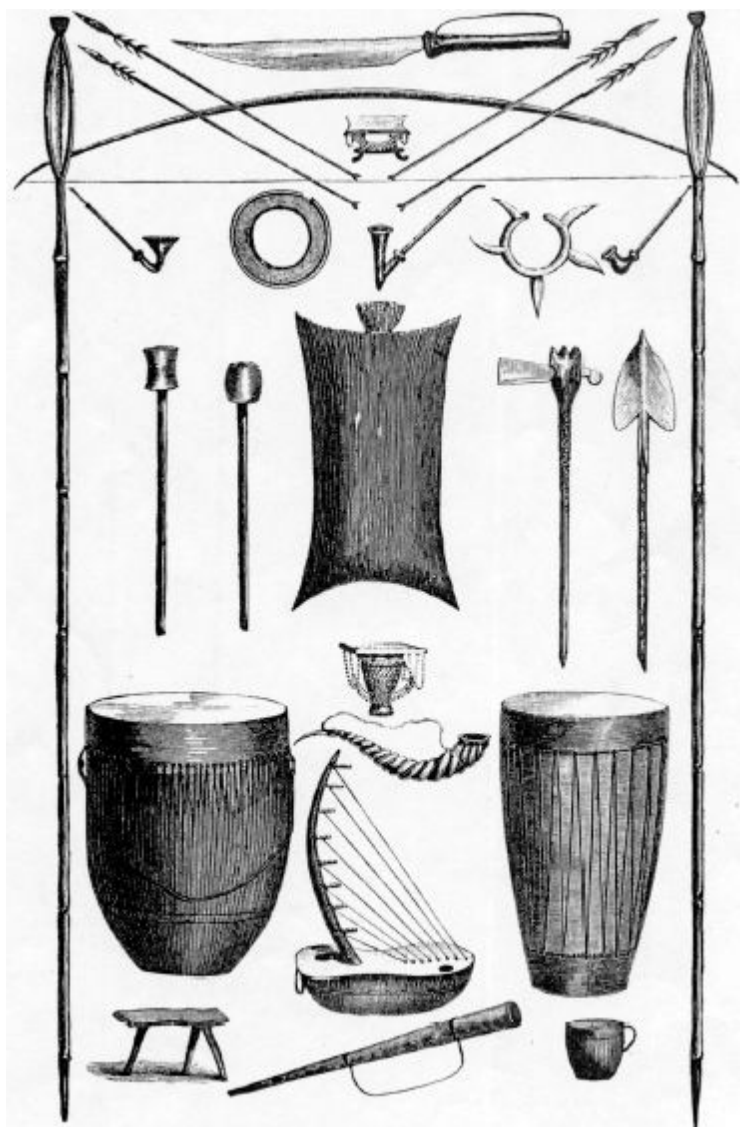
The Jie were divided into two divisions corresponding to the main territorial districts: the Rengen or Ngikaloding in the north-west, and the Ngikorwakol in the south and east. These were subdivided respectively into four and seven territorial sections, each of which

comprised a number of family-sized clans, or *ateker*. All these various groups were largely independent, but they co-operated freely in times of crisis and never seem to have fought among themselves except in a limited way with sticks and whips. Each main division had an independent political structure, with its own age-sets, or *asapanu*; fire-makers, or *ngikeworok*; and war leaders, who were known as *ekapalon ka-ajore*. The fire-makers were mainly judges and ritual chiefs, who delegated responsibility for military operations to the war leaders. Both these posts, as well as the leaders of the age-sets, were semi-hereditary, being reserved for the members of certain clans.

Apart from these positions, Jie society was very egalitarian. In practice there was not even a distinct warrior class, as there was among the Karamojong and other Nilotic tribes. Age-sets were originally ritual rather than military units, and membership was governed by an inflexible rule that all of a man's sons had to belong to the same set — the one following their father's. This meant that each set contained men of very different ages, whereas in most related tribes exceptions were often made to ensure that men of military age were initiated and fought together. Among the Jie, therefore, uninitiated men fought alongside the formally initiated 'warriors' without distinction. Like the Karamojong, warriors identified themselves with favourite 'name oxen'. The shields and weapons of the Jie were identical to those used by their Karamojong neighbours, and it seems that even after the reforms which were introduced at the end of the 19th century, the typical open order Karamojong fighting style was preferred. After their victory over the Acholi at Caicaon, when the Jie acquired a number of captured muskets, the few warriors who used them would fire from behind the protection of their shields in the same way as they had once used their spears.

Originally, Jie battlefield organisation and tactical control had been virtually non-existent. According to oral tradition 'everyone would go together in one big group'. Hence in battle 'the fighting was very confused, with everyone fighting together. It was difficult to be sure who was a friend and who was an enemy ... In the days before Loriang when the Jie were attacked by their enemies ... there was not time to arrange the army in any special way ... There was no time to say, "That man is brave. Let him go first".' Formal war chiefs in this period had few responsibilities beyond assembling the army and fighting at its head. Any strategic planning there might have been was carried out by councils of village elders. Individual prowess was greatly admired, however, and any man who could fight well might attract an informal band of followers. The most famous fighter of the 19th century, for example, was a man called Eluii, 'a brave warrior and great cattle raider', who performed most of his exploits either

alone or at the head of a group of five or ten men.



*'Arms and instruments of various tribes', illustrated by Baker. The shield is probably Acholi, the wrist knife and spiked bracelet Lotuka, and the spears and musical instruments Banyoro. The two objects at centre left may be the maces with iron 'cotton reel shaped' heads used by the Lotuka and Dodinga. (Samuel Baker, *The Albert Nyanza*, 1866)*

By the middle of the century, however, the Jie were beginning to respond to enemy pressure by developing a more effective organisation. Armies now deployed at least roughly by age groups, with the senior warriors in the centre, and the swifter juniors on the wings. Strategically they were usually on the defensive, and we often

hear of Jie armies holding the lines of rivers. Villages were also designed for defence, surrounded by 8-foot (2.4 m) palisades pierced by low gates which had to be entered on hands and knees, making an intruder vulnerable to a spear thrust as he emerged on the inside.

Then in the 1890s the Jie developed their tactics further, into a system which gave them a decisive advantage over their enemies. Loriang introduced an entirely new organisation, which was based not on the unwieldy age-sets but on territorial divisions. Men could therefore be mobilised for battle more quickly, and would fight alongside those they knew, rather than with strangers. The commanders of these divisions were permanently appointed by Loriang himself, but they selected their own subordinates. Each division was allotted a recognised place in the line of battle, and so could deploy straight from the line of march without having to wait for orders. The two divisions whose warriors had the most experience in the continual frontier skirmishing — the Panyangara and the Nakapelimoru — were regarded as elite, and took their place on the left and right wings respectively. Within the divisions there was a further level of organisation, based on the age-sets, so that the army was formally organised down to the level of 'platoons' of a few dozen men, within which a leader could personally see and communicate with all his troops. Jie informants of the colonial period, recognising the similarities with the organisation of a regular army, referred to these age-set leaders as 'sergeants' and 'corporals'.

Tactically, this meant that within each division along the line the younger men were deployed in front, with the steadier, older warriors behind them. A common tactic was to send forward the young men, who would then swiftly fall back in a feigned retreat, luring the enemy into an ambush by their seniors. Loriang himself commanded from the rear, armed only with a stick, in stark contrast to the traditional style of leadership. He imposed strict discipline throughout the army, and even went so far as to forbid cattle raiding without his permission. He won the support of the elders by bribing them with captured cattle, although oral traditions suggest that many of the younger men resented him for curtailing their freedom to raid, despite the victories which his reforms had brought.

BUNYORO

The kingdom of Bunyoro was situated on the Upper Nile, east of Lake Albert. This area was a sort of frontier zone between the tribes of the southern Sudan and the far more sophisticated kingdoms of the Central African Lakes region, of which the most important was Bunyoro's southern neighbour, Buganda. Bunyoro had once formed

the core of the ancient empire of Bunyoro-Kitara, which under the Bachwezi and Babito dynasties had dominated the entire Lake Victoria region between the 14th and 17th centuries. Like Ankole, Toro, Rwanda, and several other kingdoms in the region, Bunyoro was generally regarded as a 'Bahima' state, in which the population was divided between a farming caste of local origin — the Bairu — and an aristocracy of Bahima cattle-herders, who had originally migrated from the north (see the chapter on the Lake Kingdoms for further discussion of the Bahima elsewhere in the region).

In Bunyoro, however, the social divide between the Bahima and the Bairu was much less rigid than in the kingdoms further south. This was probably due to the influence of a third group, the Babito, who were related to the Luo and had arrived in the area around the 15th century. The Babito were formidable warriors, who quickly seized power in Bunyoro and founded a new royal line which replaced the Bahima Bachwezi dynasty. Since its peak in the 17th century, however, the military power of Bunyoro had gradually been eclipsed by that of Buganda. The loss of several rich provinces to this more populous neighbour in the late 18th century, followed by that of Toro, which broke away in the 1820s, meant that the kingdom no longer had the resources or manpower to seriously threaten Buganda's hegemony. A series of four civil wars against rebellious princes, which occurred during the reign of King Nyamutukura III in the 1820s, further weakened the Banyoro army.

After the death of King Nyabongo around 1860, Kamrasi succeeded to the throne with the assistance of an army sent by King Mtesa of Buganda, who hoped by this intervention to reduce Bunyoro to vassal status. Kamrasi defeated a rival claim by Nyabongo's brother Nakubari, but the new king's own brother, Rionga, broke away and set up what was in effect an independent state in the north of the country. During Kamrasi's reign the first European visitors arrived in Bunyoro — Speke and Grant from the south in 1862, and Baker from the north two years later. Sporadic fighting continued throughout the 1860s and early 1870s between Kamrasi and his successors on the one hand, and Rionga on the other. Both sides recruited parties of Turkish slavers as allies and, less successfully, tried to persuade Speke and Baker to use their guns against their rivals. Both explorers complained of the delays and hardships which Kamrasi inflicted on them in pursuit of this policy; Baker was detained for nearly a year by the king's failure to provide porters, and had to resort to threats of force in order to obtain food. In 1869 Kamrasi died and another succession war broke out, in which mercenaries from the Sudan took part on both sides. Harry Johnston says that one of the claimants, Kabarega, had 30 Sudanese musketeers fighting for him, while his opponent, Kabagamiri, was

supported by 20 ‘Turks of Egypt’. Mtesa of Buganda again played the role of kingmaker and sent his armies to support Kabarega, who eventually secured the throne. Mtesa had again hoped to place a compliant puppet on the throne, but in the case of Kabarega he had seriously miscalculated. Not only did the new ruler restore Bunyoro’s tattered military reputation, but a series of chance events during the second half of the 19th century cast his kingdom in the role of leader of the resistance to European occupation throughout the Lake Victoria region.

The campaigns of Kabarega, 1872-99

Kabarega’s campaigns are worth examining in detail. He seldom led his armies in person, and those armies were far from consistently victorious on the battlefield. And yet during his reign the Banyoro fought a remarkably successful series of defensive wars. This was ironic, because his driving ambition seems always to have been an expansionist one — the reconquest of the lost province of Toro. The first attempt by a colonial power to annex Bunyoro came as early as 1872, but it was not until 27 years later that resistance finally ceased. Kabarega frustrated the imperial ambitions of the Egyptians for most of the 1870s, and then those of the British throughout the 1890s, while at the same time holding his own against the Baganda, who outnumbered his own forces by ten to one. And at no time was he assisted by a popular movement of the people against the aggressors; the ordinary Banyoro generally remained fairly passive, and never took up arms on their own initiative. The armies which fought the Egyptians, the Baganda, and the British, were raised using the traditional machinery of government, through chiefs appointed by the king, and this system continued to function even when most of the country was overrun and garrisoned by the enemy. This was a remarkable achievement, and should earn Kabarega recognition as one of the most outstanding African commanders of the age. To European eyes it was tarnished by what they saw as the king’s ‘cowardice’ in repeatedly refusing battle, but in the circumstances this was certainly the most effective strategy. Centralised kingdoms like Bunyoro tended to be more vulnerable to conquest than more primitive tribes precisely because resistance was centred on the person of the king, whose death or capture was often fatal to the system. Seen in this light, Kabarega’s determination to avoid a decisive confrontation with his better-armed opponents was an important factor in prolonging Banyoro resistance.

Baker’s invasion, 1872

In 1871 Khedive Ismail of Egypt sent Samuel Baker on a mission to annex the southern Sudan and eradicate the slave trade there. The boundaries of his area of operations were not made clear in his orders, so after achieving partial success in the Bari War Baker decided on his own initiative to press on southwards to Bunyoro. He took with him a force of 212 Egyptian soldiers, leaving the rest of his troops in fortified camps in Bari territory. He detached another 100 men to form a base camp at Fatiko in the Madi country, just north of the border of Bunyoro, and in May 1872 he arrived at the Banyoro capital, Masindi, with the remaining 112 soldiers. There he was greeted by Kabarega. As the first white man to meet this monarch, Baker was in a unique position to influence foreign opinion. Unfortunately the explorer was not impressed: 'a gauche, undignified lout of twenty years of age', he wrote, 'who thought himself a great monarch. He was cowardly, cruel, cunning and treacherous to the last degree.'

On his earlier visit to the country Baker had found that Kamrasi was easily intimidated, but his attempt to treat Kabarega in the same fashion misfired. Without asking for permission he raised the Turkish flag, began constructing a timber fort, and announced that he was annexing Bunyoro to the Egyptian empire. Kabarega at first pretended to co-operate, and provided the expedition with porters, while secretly sending out messengers to assemble his army. Baker claimed that the king also tried to poison the Egyptian troops with a gift of poisoned plantain cider, but Banyoro informants later denied this, saying that the men had simply got drunk. At any rate, about 40 of Baker's men did become ill for a time, but the rest remained on duty.

At five o'clock on the morning of 7 June 1872, Kabarega launched a surprise attack on the expedition's camp. Baker and his men, however, were already on the alert and were standing to, fully armed. Baker was walking around outside the partially completed fort when he heard shots, and ordered the bugler who always accompanied him to sound the alarm. The well-drilled Egyptians immediately formed a square, just in time to meet a charge by an estimated 8,000 Banyoro. The majority of these were spearmen, but about 50 had muskets, with which they fired a volley from the cover of some bushes growing near the fort. Two men were killed at Baker's side, but the attack on the square was a failure. Most of the soldiers who were still fit were from the elite company known as the 'Forty Thieves', who were armed with Snider breech-loading rifles, and according to Baker the Banyoro 'were cut down in the high grass in all directions'. 'It was extraordinary', he continues, 'to see how impossible it appeared for natives in masses to produce any effect against Snider rifles.' The Egyptians then fought their way out through the town,

setting fire to the huts as they went, and escaped under cover of the smoke. So effective was their shooting that subsequent Banyoro oral tradition claimed that Baker had deployed a machine gun. In fact he makes no mention of this in his detailed report, nor did any machine gun exist in 1872 which was portable enough to have been taken along the narrow trails to Masindi. No doubt veterans of the battle, witnessing British Maxims in action in the 1890s, concluded in retrospect that only a similar weapon could have accounted for the devastating firepower of the breech-loaders.

Kabarega was sufficiently shaken by his losses to propose negotiations, but Baker realised that his own position was untenable. His lines of communication were in danger, and he had no choice but to retire. In fact the 300 porters lent to him by Kabarega to bring up supplies from Fatiko had secret orders to massacre the garrison there, and so cut off Baker's retreat. The king no doubt believed that the expedition would be forced to surrender by lack of food, but Baker's wife Florence, who had accompanied him unofficially, saved the column by revealing a secret store of flour which she had hidden away in sealed boxes in case of emergency. This was not the only occasion on which Mrs Baker's foresight and clear thinking in emergencies saved his expeditions from disaster, as her husband admits in his account.

Baker managed to withdraw his troops to Fatiko, a distance of over 100 miles through country covered with tall grass. The terrain was ideal for ambushes, and the retreat was harassed all the way by the Banyoro. They made false trails to lead the column astray, threw spears from the cover of the grass, and even constructed ambush sites in advance at river crossings and other points where they knew that Baker would have to pass. A screen of tall grass or reeds was left along the trail for concealment, behind which a large open space was cleared, so that the warriors could get a good run up before throwing their spears. They could therefore rain missiles down on the Egyptians when they heard them passing, while themselves remaining invisible. Meanwhile other warriors would lurk behind the expedition to cut off any stragglers. The soldiers could respond to these tactics only by firing blindly into the grass, wasting much of their scarce ammunition. Nevertheless, Baker kept the column in good order, and by means of bugle calls prevented it becoming split up by means of bugle calls. Without the buglers, he says, 'our line would have been cut, and if so, there would have been an end to everything'. He describes the order of march which he adopted as follows:

- An advance guard of 16 soldiers armed with Sniders, led by the Egyptian Colonel Abd-el-Kadir, with a bugler.
- The Bakers' own party, with another bugler, all the reserve

ammunition, and ten men with Sniders.

- The bulk of the troops, armed with rifled muzzle-loaders with ‘a few’ Sniders interspersed. (There were about 48 Snider rifles available in total).

- A rearguard of 16 Snider-armed troops under a captain, plus another bugler.

Standing orders were for the men to face alternately right and left in case of an attack and to open fire into the grass, even if they could not see the enemy. Baker himself loaded his elephant gun with explosive shells, which not only made ‘a hideous noise’ but ‘would leave very little of a man’ if they hit him. These shells always produced a noticeable morale effect on the Banyoro, even if it was impossible to see if they had actually struck their target.

In this way, after seven days of continuous fighting, the Bakers arrived in territory held by the rival claimant to the Banyoro throne, Rionga. There they were safe from pursuit. At Fatiko he found that Kabarega’s plan had somehow miscarried, and the garrison was still intact. Baker eventually returned home and claimed a victory over Kabarega, but the reality was that the first armed conflict between Bunyoro and an imperial power had ended in the ignominious retreat of the invaders.

Rionga happily accepted Egyptian overlordship in return for protection against Kabarega, and the Egyptians quickly built and garrisoned a string of forts in the territory which he controlled. Baker’s parting shot was to proclaim Rionga king of Bunyoro under the Khedive, and to announce that Kabarega was deposed. After the explorer’s departure the post of governor of Egypt’s new Equatoria province was taken over by Charles ‘Chinese’ Gordon, who had made his reputation during the Taiping Rebellion in China. Gordon sent out several expeditions, which established a total of seven forts inside Bunyoro: at Mruli, Foweira, Kodj, Keroto, Magungo on Lake Albert, Kissuna, and even at Masindi itself. This time Kabarega abandoned his capital on the approach of the Egyptian column, but he remained in control of the rest of his territory. When Gordon’s envoy Colonel Chaillé-Long passed through on his way to Buganda in August 1874, he and two soldiers were attacked by 400 Banyoro warriors in canoes. Chaillé-Long was wounded but beat the attackers off, ‘after a fight lasting from midday until sunset’, by sinking their canoes with his elephant gun.

In June 1876 Gordon reported to the British Foreign Office that Bunyoro had been annexed to Egypt and Kabarega finally deposed, and that he proposed to divide the country between Rionga and another of Kabarega’s rivals, Aufina. However, this announcement was premature. Kissuna and Masindi were evacuated late the same year

because of the difficulty of supplying them, after less than a year of occupation. Gordon brought in field artillery and rocket tubes to protect the other forts, which he surrounded with earthworks and moats. He also launched two steamers, the *Nyanza* and the *Khedive*, on the Nile. But further reinforcements from Egypt did not arrive, and gradually Kabarega regained the upper hand. In 1877 a column of 200 Egyptian troops operating out of the fort at Mruli was ambushed and destroyed by Lango tribesmen in Kabarega's employ. When the missionary R.W. Felkin arrived in 1878 he found the forts permanently under siege, and his own Egyptian escort was attacked on his way home. Before his departure from the Sudan the same year, Gordon ordered all the remaining forts in Bunyoro to be abandoned.

During the following decade the victorious Banyoro went on to the offensive against the neighbouring kingdoms, and Stanley, who arrived in the area in 1888 with the Emin Pasha Relief Expedition, describes the dread which they inspired among the people of Ankole and Toro. Kabarega had at first been on fairly friendly terms with Emin, who succeeded Gordon as commander of the Egyptian garrisons in the Equatoria province of Sudan, but when Stanley's expedition appeared he suspected that Stanley and Emin were about to combine their forces to attack him. He therefore expelled Emin's agent Captain Casati — leaving him and his servants tied naked to trees in the jungle in an obvious act of defiance — and launched several hit-and-run attacks on Stanley's column as it passed through the region. The king also continued to raid into Buganda, which was by this time coming under strong European influence, and so confirmed his reputation as an irreconcilable enemy of imperial interests.

The Battle of Rwengabi, January 1886

Early in 1886 a Baganda army under Kibirango, chief of Bulemezi, invaded Bunyoro. Kabarega at first intended to await the enemy in his capital, but was advised that this would leave most of the country exposed to the risk of being plundered. Therefore he advanced to meet them near the forest of Rwengabi, in the frontier province of Bugoma. He deployed the royal guard or *bonosoora* — all armed with muskets — 12 ranks deep in the centre, with the contingents of his provincial chiefs on the flanks. The Baganda attacked at dawn to the sound of drums, concentrating their assault on the flanks, and at first drove the Banyoro back. The *bonosoora* then commenced a protracted firefight with the enemy to their front, who eventually fled, leaving one of their drums behind.

By midday the Banyoro appeared to be victorious, and the chiefs suggested that their men should be allowed to rest and eat.

Instead Kabarega regrouped his tired army and led it forward to finish off the enemy. They had not gone far before hordes of Baganda spearmen were seen advancing towards them in open order from several directions. It is not clear whether Kibirango had managed to rally the fugitives and had sent them forward without waiting to form a proper line of battle, or whether he intended this open order to minimise the effect of the enemy's guns. Kabarega ordered the *bonosoora* to deploy into skirmishing formation and kneel down to take aim, but not to fire until he did. They drove off the Baganda with a series of volleys at close range, and Kabarega personally shot down Kibirango as he fell back.

However, instead of demoralising the Baganda the death of their leader provoked them to attack with even greater fury. The fighting continued all afternoon, until, towards evening, the invaders once more retired, leaving the Banyoro in possession of the battlefield. At this point one of the *bonosoora* ran forward and began to drag away Kibirango's body, but some of the retreating Baganda saw this and launched yet another attack, which succeeded in retrieving the body. Losses were heavy on both sides in this battle, but at last the invaders admitted defeat and fled. The musketry of the *bonosoora*, although notoriously inaccurate, had made a great impression on the Baganda, giving rise to a saying that 'if anyone has not seen guns, let him go to Bunyoro'.

Lugard's campaign, 1891

In 1891, a force under Captain F.J. Lugard succeeded in establishing a precarious British authority in Buganda. Kabarega had by now taken advantage of the civil wars in Buganda to completely overrun Toro, which Lugard now considered to be under British protection. He also suspected the Banyoro of harbouring dissident Baganda Muslim fighters, and furthermore he wished to open up a route to the survivors of Emin Pasha's Egyptian garrisons north of Bunyoro, whom he hoped to recruit into his own forces. In August 1891, therefore, Lugard led a column of askaris into Bunyoro from Fort George in Toro, in conjunction with a large force of allied Baganda. The expedition soon ran into a Banyoro army on the Mokia River. This army was estimated to be 5,000 strong, but it consisted of semi-trained local levies rather than the regular army regiments. The British column had become strung out during a long march, and Lugard was well ahead of his main body with a patrol of only 40 men. He quickly deployed into a defensive line, sending back messengers to hurry up the rest of his force, the exact strength of which he does not state. Ahead of him was a dense wood, and beyond that a line of low

hills, 'black with men'. The Banyoro occupied the wood and began firing out of it with their muskets at long range, but despite their numerical superiority they did not press home the attack. After an anxious hour of waiting, most of Lugard's men arrived. The reinforcements, which included a Maxim gun, enabled him to go on to the offensive. He sent his Baganda allies into the wood, ordering them not to shoot in order to conserve ammunition, then opened fire on the hills in front with the Maxim at a range of about 950 yds (870 m). This caused panic in the Banyoro army, which fled as soon as the Baganda — who 'behaved splendidly' according to Lugard — came to close quarters.

In the subsequent fighting Kabarega's men often succeeded in outmanoeuvring or ambushing the invaders, but were let down by their poor musketry. In a second encounter a Banyoro army including some *bonosoora*, or regular troops, was driven off in a bayonet charge with no casualties on either side, as their shooting was so inaccurate. On another occasion, when marching along the River Semliki, Lugard's column came under fire from the opposite bank at a range of about 100 yds (90 m). Lugard estimated that 1,000 rounds were fired at his men, and from the sound he suspected that many of these were from breech-loaders, but no one was hit. A detachment of 30 men was subsequently attacked at Suroor Adam by a force of Banyoro armed with muzzle-loaders, but was saved when a rainstorm put the enemy's weapons out of action. Instead of charging, the Banyoro allowed the patrol to escape by night.

Having brushed aside all opposition, Lugard completed his mission by marching to Kavalli's village near Lake Albert, where he recruited the Egyptian garrison into his force and brought them back to Buganda. But — apparently influenced by Baker's prejudices and the views of his Baganda allies — he had become an implacable enemy of Kabarega. 'When I have time', he wrote, 'there is nothing I would like better than to turn out the inhuman fiend'.

War with the British, 1893–95

In December 1893 the British and their Baganda allies formally declared war on Kabarega, following reports that he had launched another attack on Toro. Shortly before this a clash had occurred in Singo between a Banyoro army under the powerful local chief Kikukuri, including about 2,000 musketeers, and a force of 200 Sudanese askaris led by Major Owen, who had been despatched to defend Toro. The battle took place in long grass, which prevented either side from seeing their enemies and made shooting ineffective. Owen also had a Maxim gun, but this jammed after firing about a

dozen shots. He therefore led a series of bayonet charges, which took several enemy positions in succession, finally driving Kikukuri from the field.

Immediately after the declaration of war an expedition under Colonel Colville of the Grenadier Guards was sent to invade Bunyoro. Colville took with him three British officers, 200 Sudanese askaris, 200 armed and 200 unarmed porters, and two Maxim guns, as well as a steel boat which could be dismantled and carried overland in sections. (One Maxim did not work, but it proved useful as a dummy, mounted in the bow of the boat to deter potential attackers.) He was also accompanied by 15,000 Baganda, of whom about a fifth had firearms and the rest spears. Kabarega was thought to have 20,000 men under arms, 8,000 of whom were musketeers, but his regular *bonosoora* units were still campaigning in Toro and could not be recalled in time to meet the invasion.

The invaders found the Banyoro capital — now situated at Mparo — abandoned and burnt, but soon afterwards the first contact with the enemy occurred when a patrol of 50 askaris was ambushed by about 200 Banyoro. The ambushers opened fire from a patch of grass at a range of 10 yds (9 m), but they caused no casualties and were driven off. Colville believed that enemy detachments kept his column under observation continuously, even though they were seldom seen, and gave as proof the fact that stragglers were frequently killed within 100 yds (90 m) of the main body. In January 1894, the British force deployed for a frontal attack on what they believed was the main Banyoro defensive position, on the edge of the Budonga Forest. They placed their askaris and the Maxims in the centre, with Baganda musketeers echeloned back on their flanks, and the Baganda spearmen further back on the wings. However, the enemy force turned out to be only a rearguard, which slipped away without putting up serious resistance.

The dense stands of tall grass which were typical of Bunyoro made long-range shooting very difficult, and help to explain why casualties in these campaigns were often very low on both sides. Colville's column took with it a bamboo tripod designed to enable an observer to see over the grass, but it proved useless; although the observer's head was now 12 ft (3.7 m) above the ground, the grass stems were higher still. The Banyoro musketeers wasted enormous amounts of ammunition by firing blindly into the thickets, but the British soon learned to hold their own fire and attack with the bayonet instead. Their enemies were not trained to fight at close quarters, so this tactic was almost always successful.

At the beginning of 1894 the Baganda column, now operating independently, managed to surprise Kabarega's camp on the edge of

the Budonga Forest and rout his forces, but the king himself escaped. From now on the Banyoro avoided contact as much as possible, although a few more skirmishes occurred with the Sudanese. Colville marched unopposed as far as the shore of Lake Albert, and built forts at Kibiro and Hoima before returning to Buganda in March 1894, claiming victory. Fort Hoima was intended to be the headquarters of a permanent garrison in Bunyoro, consisting of three and a half companies of Sudanese, which was left behind under the command of Captain Thruston.

But Kabarega was not yet beaten. He had withdrawn temporarily across the Nile, but returned as soon as Colville departed. Another expedition was sent back under Captain Gibb to confiscate his store of ivory at Mruli, but the king again avoided battle, and succeeded in escaping with his ivory intact. Meanwhile the Banyoro continued to resist Thruston with guerrilla tactics, harassing the garrison at Hoima and striking at isolated patrols and supply caravans. One of Kabarega's generals, Babachwezi, seized a steep hill at Masaja Mkuro, from which he began to launch attacks on the caravans. In May 1894 Thruston stormed the hill — ordering his Sudanese to use their rifle butts as they had no bayonets — and took it without any serious casualties. (Colville says that the Banyoro, who were bad shots at the best of times, found it very difficult to shoot downhill, and eventually resorted to throwing stones.) Another supply convoy was ambushed in October by 220 Banyoro riflemen, but escaped with only three men killed and three wounded. Witnesses said that all the casualties appeared to have been inflicted by a single marksman, all the others being completely ineffective.

A more serious battle had been fought in August, when Kabarega's son Majasi and a leading general called Ireya attacked Fort Hoima itself. They deployed several thousand spearmen, but all the actual fighting was done by 750 riflemen, who were outclassed in a firefight by the Sudanese and were eventually rolled up by a flank attack delivered by 50 askaris. Again the Banyoro shooting was very bad; British losses amounted to only eight wounded, while about 200 Banyoro were allegedly killed. (This is rather doubtful, however, as Colville says that only 3,000 rounds of ammunition were expended in the battle, giving an improbably high ratio of one casualty for every 15 rounds fired.)

In November Thruston received intelligence that Kabarega was at Machudi, 78 miles from Fort Hoima. He led 237 Sudanese on a forced march which reached Machudi in three days and nearly surprised the king, who had been aware of his approach but had not believed that the distance could be covered so quickly. The alarm was raised by the lowing of a cow, giving Kabarega time to escape yet

again, although Thruston did seize the copper spear and brass and iron sceptre which were the insignia of Banyoro royalty.

The final campaigns, 1895–99

Kabarega now sent an envoy to request peace terms, but a group of his own generals, including Ireya, Kikikuri, and Babachwezi, refused to surrender. Another chief, Rwabudongo, invaded the district of Mwenge in Buganda and defeated the local forces, then went on to make contact with an Arab caravan smuggling in guns from the south. The British retaliated in March 1895 by attacking Kabarega's position on Kajumbara Island in the Nile, north of Mruli. The expedition was led by Major Cunningham, and consisted of four and a half companies of Sudanese, about 2,000 Baganda, and two Maxim guns.

Kabarega's *bonosoora* regulars were entrenched in fortified positions protected by wooden stockades, guarding all the possible landing places on the island. So Cunningham had no choice but to attack frontally. He led the Sudanese across the Nile in a fleet of small canoes, while the Maxims under Lieutenant S. Vandeleur were placed on a platform on the shore to give covering fire. However, there was a dense mist along the river, and Vandeleur was unable to see clearly enough to engage targets on the island. The *bonosoora* opened fire on the boats at close range, and on this occasion their fire proved effective. Cunningham was badly wounded, while another British officer and several Sudanese were killed. The attack was repulsed, and the expedition retreated to Fort Hoima.

For a few weeks the triumphant Banyoro placed the forts under siege, but another British force was soon collected and marched to Mruli. Here Kabarega tried to repeat his success by again contesting a crossing of the Nile, but the invaders were now in much greater strength. They deployed six companies of Sudanese, three Maxim guns, and two small Hotchkiss field pieces, which Lieutenant Vandeleur describes as 'wonderfully accurate and of great value'. In addition there were perhaps 20,000 Baganda troops under their prime minister, Apolo Kagwa. On the far bank the Banyoro dug trenches and erected barricades, continuing the work at night after Cunningham ordered the Maxims to fire on them by day. On 22 April the Sudanese and Baganda crossed the river, which was about 900 yds (820 m) wide, under the cover of the artillery. This time, despite the volume of enemy fire, they landed and stormed the stockades. About 40 Banyoro died defending them, but the rest escaped through a swamp. Vandeleur pays tribute to the courage and discipline of the Baganda, who made a vital contribution to the victory. He also records that the British pursuit was hampered by crocodiles, which devoured several of

the Sudanese soldiers while crossing the swamp.

Kabarega again got away, taking refuge across the Nile in the land of the friendly Lango, but most of his cattle and several members of his family were soon rounded up by the Sudanese and Baganda. For the moment the Lango remained loyal, and they succeeded in destroying a party of 150 Baganda in an ambush in May, but some of the most important Banyoro chiefs — including Babachwezi, Rwabudongo, and Kikukuri — now began to surrender to the British. New forts were built on the sites of the former Egyptian bases at Mruli and Masindi, in an attempt to prevent Kabarega returning to Bunyoro, and in June Lieutenant Vandeleur intercepted two more Arab caravans which were bringing guns to the enemy.

After 1895 Kabarega was reduced to raiding into British-occupied Bunyoro from across the Nile, and eventually even the Lango turned against him. He tried to contact the Mahdists in the Sudan with an offer of alliance, but his emissaries were killed by local tribesmen and the survivors were forced to turn back. The king's son Jasi and his general Ireyta, who remained loyal, were now in command of the Banyoro forces, and they still dominated the Nile with their fleet of canoes. In May 1898 they received unexpected reinforcements with the arrival of King Mwanga from Buganda, fleeing after a failed revolt against the British. Kabarega and Mwanga had been long-standing enemies, but now they found themselves on the same side against the British occupation of both their countries. A group of Sudanese askaris, survivors of the previous year's mutiny against the British in Buganda, also temporarily went over to the Banyoro.

The Banyoro won a last victory in September 1898, when Kikukuri, who had again taken up arms on behalf of Kabarega, attacked Fort Hoima. The Sudanese garrison had been withdrawn, and the fort was garrisoned by supposedly pro-British Banyoro, led by Babachwezi. Whether out of fear or from sympathy with the enemy, this garrison evacuated the stronghold and allowed Kikukuri to burn it. A few days later a British column reoccupied the fort, but it was now obvious that the only way to defeat Kabarega once and for all was to take the war to him in his refuge across the river.

In April 1899 a column under Colonel Evatt, accompanied by a force of Baganda led by Semei Kakunguru, was conducted by a Lango defector to Kabarega's camp. The Banyoro army had been sent away south to intercept another British column, and only Kabarega, Jasi, Mwanga, and a few of their chiefs and followers remained in the camp. Nevertheless, they resisted when surprised, and in the ensuing gunfight Jasi was killed, while Kabarega was wounded and captured. The Banyoro had fought on for so long mainly because of their personal loyalty to the king, and his capture effectively ended the

struggle. A month later Ireyta and Kikukuri surrendered, and the longest war of resistance in 19th-century East Africa was finally over.

Organisation

Estimates of the total population of Bunyoro in the 19th century vary greatly, but the best estimate, by Harry Johnston in 1902, is about 110,000 — only about a tenth of that of its hostile neighbour Buganda. Not surprisingly, therefore, military organisation played a very large role in Banyoro life. The entire country was nominally the personal property of the king, who was known as the *omukama* or *mukama*, but in practice it was a fairly loose confederation of provinces or *saza*, ruled by chiefs known as ‘the *omukama*’s spears’. These were not hereditary tribal or clan leaders, but were appointed by the king, although early in the century men of Bito ancestry had a more or less exclusive monopoly over the *sazas*. The missionary J. Roscoe lists ten such local magnates, but Banyoro tradition claims that under Kabarega there were as many as 28. They were supposed to attend the court regularly, and not to do so was regarded as a sign of disloyalty, but in practice the king had no power to compel them, and the chiefs of the remoter districts especially tended to become semi-autonomous rulers.

Thus Bunyoro had a tendency to grow in power during the reign of a strong king, who was able to impose discipline on his subordinate chiefs, but to decline into chaos under a less capable ruler. Traditionally, whichever of the royal princes buried the jawbone of a deceased *omukama* had the right to succeed him. This system meant that the death of a ruler was usually followed by a struggle over his remains — in fact, according to Banyoro accounts, most of the fighting throughout their history had been in such civil conflicts — but it did help to ensure that the successful contender would be a man of sufficient ability to prevail over his rivals. The king did not usually fight in person, but appointed generals to lead his armies. These were routinely exiled or publicly humiliated in the event of failure. An important symbolic item was the royal drum, representing the power of the king, which was carried at the head of every royal army.

The Banyoro army, unlike that of other ‘Bahima’ states, was a mass levy drawn indiscriminately from both the Bahima and Bairu populations. Also unusually among Bahima-led forces, men of any origin were regularly promoted to command positions, based on their military ability rather than their tribe or social class. By 1885 a Zanzibari Arab, Abd Rehman, had become chief adviser to Kabarega. Most of the Banyoro troops were irregular levies, who were called up

when required through their *saza* chiefs, but in the later 19th century there was also a royal standing army, the *bonosoora* (also referred to as *barasura* or *wara sura*), which according to Samuel Baker was 1,000 strong in 1872, but grew rapidly in numbers thereafter. In 1885 Emin Pasha mentioned 3,000 *bonosoora*, and by the 1890s the unit comprised ten divisions, each of 2,000 men. The founding of this institution has often been attributed to Kabarega, but Baker refers to a bodyguard unit of 500 men in the service of his predecessor Kamrasi in 1864, so the origins of the *bonosoora* may go back further than this. According to Baker Kamrasi's bodyguard was mainly used to suppress internal dissension, and was 'allowed to pillage the country at discretion ... thus the tyrant held his sway over a population so timid that they yielded tamely to his oppression'.

According to the Banyoro scholar J.W. Nyakatura, in the latter part of Kabarega's reign the *bonosoora* were organised into 15 *ebitongole* or battalions, of which the first ten were the 'major divisions', the remaining five being either subdivisions of these ten or detached garrison units. The names of the ten battalions, with their commanders (in brackets), were as follows:

1. Ekidoka (Kyamuhangire Ruhimbya)
2. Ekihukya (Rusongoza)
3. Ekiporopyo (Kajura)
4. Eki gwera (Kabagambe). This unit was responsible for the defence of the Buganda border region.
5. Ekikabya (Rukara)
6. Ekihambya (Rwabudongo)
7. Ekibangya (Katalikabu)
8. Eki rwana (Ireyta). This battalion was permanently stationed on the western frontier.
9. Ekibanja (Kikukuri)
10. Ekibale (Nyakamura). This unit was based at the capital, in the heart of Banyoro.

The troops of the provincial chiefs were known as *Obwesengeze* and were similarly divided into *ebitongole*, of which Nyakatura gives us the names of five: Ekitanda, Ekitasa, Ekirohoza, Ekihinda, and Ekitalesa.

In Kamrasi's day the armed forces of Bunyoro had a poor reputation. To J.H. Speke, the 'Wanyoro' warriors were 'a wild set of ragamuffins — as different as possible from the smart, well-dressed, quick-of-speech Waganda'. The reports of his African informants were no more complimentary: one 'informed us they had been twice sent with an army of Wanyoro to attack the king's brothers ... but each time it ended in nothing. You fancy yourself, they said, in a

magnificent army, but the enemy no sooner turn out than the cowardly Wanyoro fly, and sacrifice their ally as soon as not into the hands of the opponents'. Twenty years later Roscoe confirmed this impression, dismissing the Banyoro as having 'no order and little discipline'. Speke also records a chief's remark that Kamrasi never retaliated when raiders from Buganda stole his cattle, and draws the obvious conclusion that this was because his men were unable or unwilling to face the Baganda army. Baker gives a humorous account of Kamrasi's reaction to reports of an invasion by no more than 150 Turks in 1864: 'I was much amused at his trepidation, and observing the curious change in his costume, I complimented him upon the practical cut of his dress, that was better adapted for fighting than the long and cumbrous mantle. "Fighting!" he exclaimed, with the horror of "Bob Acres", "I am not going to fight! I have dressed lightly to be able to run quickly. I mean to run away! Who can fight against guns?"'

During the reign of Kabarega, however, Bunyoro began to regain its reputation as a formidable military power. Baker, writing about the situation in 1872, says that 'although the natives of Unyoro are inferior to the Baris as warriors, they are far more dangerous, as that extensive country is thoroughly organised ... In case of war, every Chief of a district arrives at the head-quarters with an army, an army called suddenly by the war-drum, and it is most extraordinary to see the celerity with which these people collect.' The total numbers available to the king were, in Baker's opinion, 'impossible to guess', but armies up to 50,000 strong are recorded elsewhere for Kabarega's reign. This figure seems excessive in view of the small overall population of the country, but would also include levies from frontier peoples like the Acholi and Lango who were probably not included in most assessments of the Banyoro population. During Kabarega's time, therefore, the balance of power between Bunyoro and Buganda began to swing back in favour of the former, to the point where in 1876 Stanley recorded his annoyance at the conduct of a contingent of Baganda troops ordered to accompany him to Lake Albert, who were openly terrified of the Banyoro.

There was a long tradition of employing people from outside the kingdom as mercenaries. Tribesmen like the Lango were supplemented in the 1860s and 1870s by Turks from the Sudan, who began by raiding the country but were persuaded by Kamrasi and Baker to help against a Baganda invasion in 1864. They also participated on all sides in the civil wars following the death of Kamrasi, and later joined with Baganda and loyal Banyoro contingents to put Kabarega on the throne. Foreigners were often appointed to command the *bonosoora*, helping to ensure that they remained aloof

from local clan politics and loyal only to the king.

Tactics

Until late in the 19th century, the standard armament of the Banyoro was the traditional Bahima pair of spears — one for throwing, and one for close combat. Grant says that their spears were weak and badly made, but according to Gordon the warriors could ‘throw their lances 50 yards with a sure aim’. Unlike other Bahima the Banyoro did not use the bow, although some archers were provided by tribal mercenaries. Tactically, the Banyoro preferred to fight by means of surprise attacks and ambushes. Lugard claims that they were famous for night attacks, but in fact these are seldom mentioned in battle accounts. It is notable, for example, that although they could have fairly easily overrun Baker’s column on his retreat from Masindi by attacking at night, they did not attempt to do so. According to Baker they always initiated an ambush by imitating the cry of a certain bird, which his men came to recognise, thus giving them a brief warning of any attack.



A Banyoro knife, illustrated in Richard Burton's Book of the Sword, possibly from an example brought home by Baker.

In the 1860s firearms were almost unknown in Bunyoro; Speke and Grant mention no weapons other than spears and shields, and the former describes how a crowd of more than a thousand gathered to see a rifle demonstrated, and ‘shouted in amazement’ when Kamrasi shot a cow. According to Baker, Kamrasi deployed a handful of musketeers against the Baganda invaders in 1864, but neither side had any bullets for their guns, so they had to content themselves with a

bloodless exchange of blank charges. By the time Baker returned in 1872, Kabarega had a permanent bodyguard of 50 musketeers, and the explorer claims that 'many' of the *bonosoora* possessed guns, although of the 8,000 warriors who fought at the Battle of Masindi the same year only about 50 (who may in fact have been the same men as the king's bodyguard mentioned above) used them. By the 1890s, however, large numbers of firearms had been imported by Arab and Swahili merchants, or acquired via deserters from Emin Pasha's Egyptian garrisons in the Sudan. These included up-to-date breech-loading models such as Sniders and Remingtons. After a brief fight with 50 *bonosoora* on the Semliki River in 1889, Stanley noted that in their retreat they dropped 'several as well-made cartridges as could be prepared at Woolwich'. However, as the troops were such poor marksmen this influx of guns cannot be said to have made a significant contribution to the army's fighting ability. It was often observed at the time that the arms trade in Africa merely replaced an effective spearman with an ineffective musketeer, and the experience of the Banyoro tends to confirm this. It is especially noteworthy that the most successful actions against both the Baganda and the Egyptian regulars were carried out by Lango spearmen, and not by the expensively equipped *bonosoora*.

THE LANGO

The Lango were also known as the Kedi, Kidi, or Umiro. They lived across the Nile to the north of Bunyoro, and were formidable warriors who were often employed as mercenaries, being paid in copper, iron, and sweet potatoes. They were a mixture of local Acholi and migrants from the north related to the Luo, who regularly raided the neighbouring tribes for cattle and slaves. They were usually on friendly terms with the Acholi, but were traditional enemies of the Madi. During the 18th and early 19th centuries they fought numerous battles with the Madi, most of which they lost. In 1872 they had a disastrous encounter with a Turkish slaver named Ali Hussein, who captured many of their people by treachery. Soon afterwards another Turkish expedition was sent against them under a man called Lazim, whom Baker describes as 'a notorious ruffian'. Lazim's column, which comprised 103 men with guns and 150 Madi spearmen, intended to attack a Lango village at dawn, but marched into an ambush from which only one survivor escaped. After this setback the slavers seldom ventured into Lango territory.

By the 19th century the Lango were well organised for warfare. They were led by an overall war-chief called a *witong*, of whom the most famous were Ogwal Abura, Akedi, and Agoro Abwango. Armies

were customarily divided into three columns known as *wich*, each of three or more *eryonget* or companies. The two flank columns would advance ahead of the centre column, which contained the most experienced warriors and operated as a reserve. The leader of a column was called a *twon lwak*. He was always accompanied by a man with a drum, which was used to keep the columns in touch with each other and to rally stragglers. In open battle the Lango would send out skirmishers to throw their spears, then charge when the enemy was seen to waver. The warriors are said to have stopped their ears with leaves so that they would not be demoralised by the war-cries of the enemy. Wounded men were expected to be stoical, and would sometimes be killed if they cried out too loudly, to prevent them starting a panic.

When Agoro Abwango died in 1886 a vicious civil war broke out over the succession, but most of the fighting in which the Lango were involved was in alliance with the Banyoro, alongside whom they continued to fight until the end of the 1890s. Lango warriors were recruited into the Banyoro *bonosoora*, as well as fighting in their own tribal groups with their traditional spears. The loss of 200 Egyptian soldiers in an ambush by pro-Bunyoro Lango tribesmen in 1877 has already been mentioned, and at Foweira in 1895, still fighting for Kabarega, they routed 150 Baganda in a similar surprise attack, spreading temporary panic throughout the Baganda army. Lieutenant Vandeleur, who was with the Baganda on the latter occasion, describes the Lango as ‘a formidable race’, and says that the Baganda were far more afraid of them than they were of the Banyoro. It was not until 1903 that they were finally suppressed by the British and their Baganda allies.

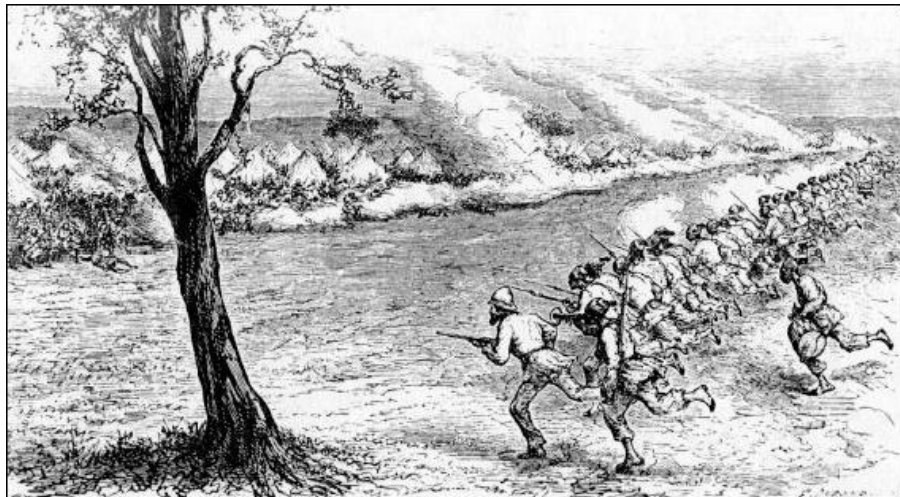
THE ‘TURKS’

Until the 1870s, Egyptian power south of the Nile marshes was represented only by the caravans of the Khartoum-based freelance ‘traders’ who plundered the area for slaves and ivory. Operating under the flag of the Ottoman Empire of which they were nominally a part, they were generally referred to as ‘Turks’ by the native tribes, although they were of very diverse origins, including outlaws and renegades of every description as well as genuine — if unscrupulous — merchants. Baker gives a detailed description of the way in which a typical slaving caravan operated. A group of ‘penniless adventurers’ would borrow money in Khartoum, ostensibly for a trading expedition, in return for a promise to repay the lender in ivory. They would then hire between 100 and 300 men from among the local Arabs and the fugitives from justice who congregated in the town,

together with the boats to carry them upriver. The rest of the money would be spent on guns and ammunition. There would seldom be anything left for trade goods, and in any case the usual item of trade, cloth, was useless in the southern Sudan, where most of the tribes did not wear clothing. In fact the system was organised on a rather more formal basis than Baker implies, with most of the caravans financed and equipped by permanent, officially registered 'trading companies'. In 1860 there were eight European companies licensed to trade in the Sudan — four French, two British, and two Austrian — all of which were heavily involved in the slave-raiding.

On arrival in their area of operations, the 'traders' would visit a local chief and, in return for his hospitality, offer to use their guns to help him against his enemies — either a neighbouring tribe, or a rival for power among his own people. The local tribesmen would guide them to a hostile village, and they would surround it under cover of darkness. Then at dawn the Turks would set fire to the huts, and commence firing volleys into the village. Their victims, unfamiliar with firearms, seldom put up much resistance. The men would be slaughtered, the cattle driven off, and the women and children led into slavery. Returning to the secure base provided by their local host, the traders would then barter the cattle, and any of the slaves who could be ransomed, for ivory — 'a profitable business', observes Baker, 'as the cows have cost nothing'. The rest of the slaves were disposed of to the men of the slaving party in lieu of wages, to be taken back to Khartoum and sold. All that was then required was to draw up false documents to give the impression that the ivory had been obtained by legitimate commerce, but this was not a pressing problem since the authorities in Khartoum, from the Egyptian Viceroy down, were themselves involved in the business, and could easily be bribed.

Successful slavers often established permanent bases in the south, whose garrisons were not only deeply involved in the inter-tribal warfare of the region but often provoked it themselves. Groups of Bari, Lotuka, and other tribesmen fought alongside them, and individual Bari warriors in particular might be recruited on a permanent basis and issued with Arab clothing and guns. In 1871 Baker estimated that there were 1,100 slavers active in the southern Sudan, although the total pool of manpower available at Khartoum was as much as 15,000. The largest trading firm, Agad & Co, employed about 2,500 armed slave-hunters in total, and controlled an area — which was officially an ivory concession — of about 90,000 square miles (233,000 square km).



*Baker's bodyguard charges Mohammed Wat-el-Mek's slave traders at Fatiko, August 1872.
(Samuel Baker, Ismailia, 1874)*

The Battle of Fatiko, August 1872

The long-standing hostility between Baker and the Turkish slavers culminated in a brief fight at Fatiko in August 1872. Baker arrived in the vicinity of the town on his way back from his campaign in Bunyoro to find that the Turks under Mohammad Wat-el-Mek, believing him to be dead, had recommenced raiding in the area. The natives asked Baker, as a representative of the Egyptian government, to protect them, so leaving the rest of his column behind he pressed on with his elite 'Forty Thieves' to Fatiko. There he linked up with a detachment of 100 infantry under Major Abdullah, whom he had left to garrison the town. As Baker conversed with the Major the troops of both parties abandoned their formations to greet each other, becoming mixed up and closely packed together.

A band of about 270 Turks, who were encamped nearby, suddenly advanced and opened fire unexpectedly into this irresistible target from a range of 90 yds (82 m). Seven of Baker's men were hit in the first volley, and their commander admitted that they could have suffered heavy losses before they were able to deploy and return fire. However, as soon as the advance was sounded on the bugle, the 'Forty Thieves' extricated themselves from the mass and, without further orders, formed line and charged with fixed bayonets. The enemy were given no time to reload and so were routed at once, and the victorious soldiers fired into them as they retreated, inflicting heavy losses. Baker says that 141 Turks were found dead on the field, and another 43, including Wat-el-Mek himself, were captured.

Organisation

The members of these slaving parties were by no means a disorganised rabble. They incorporated many deserters from the Egyptian army who had some familiarity with military life, and were organised into companies, given training in marksmanship and drill, and controlled by drums, fifes, and flags. Drums were beaten to sound the alarm, as well as to give signals in battle. Baker describes the good order of a caravan on the march: 'The traders march in good form; one flag leads the party, guarded by eight or ten men, while a native carries a box of five hundred cartridges for their use in case of an attack. The porters and baggage follow in single file, soldiers being at intervals to prevent them from running away; in which case the runner is invariably fired at. The supply of ammunition is in the centre, carried generally by about fifteen natives, and strongly escorted by guards. The rear of the party is closed by another flag, behind which no straggler is permitted. The rear flag is also guarded by six or eight men, with a box of spare ammunition. With these arrangements the party is always ready to support an attack.'

Speke was surprised to find that the Maltese trader Andrea De Bono's men understood Turkish words of command, and were regularly drilled every Friday. They 'manoeuvred with some show of good training; though ... all the privates gave orders as well as their captains.' On the other hand, Speke's companion Grant found these attempts at drill laughable, and says that when the order to form square was given in his presence, one side turned the wrong way and faced inwards. Their shooting was also poor, and Baker frequently describes them with the phrase 'shooters, but not hitters'. This, he says, was because they did not know how to estimate range.

THE EGYPTIANS

From the beginning of the 1870s onwards the Egyptian Khedive adopted a policy of extending his Sudanese empire further south into the Lake Victoria region. Samuel Baker's expedition of 1871–72 was the first serious attempt to achieve this goal, but it was by no means the last. It was reported in the Proceedings of the Royal Geographical Society in 1873 that Khedive Ismail was planning to send a column of 80 or 90 soldiers to relieve Baker in Bunyoro, marching from Mombasa on the east coast via Mount Kilimanjaro and Lake Baringo. In view of the fact that this route was then entirely unexplored, that caravans of over a thousand Swahili were regularly massacred in this region by the Masai, and that Baker's considerably larger force had in fact just been driven out of Bunyoro, this must qualify as the most

ambitious operation ever contemplated in Africa. Luckily for the troops involved, the expedition was never despatched.



Baker in full dress uniform as a Pasha in the Egyptian army, 1871. (Samuel Baker, Ismailia, 1874)

Another far-reaching Egyptian initiative did get off the ground, although it too was quickly abandoned. In 1875 Ismail despatched a former British officer in his service, McKillop Pasha, with a small party to build a fort at the mouth of the River Juba, on the east coast north of Mombasa. The strategic objective was for Gordon — whose operations in Central Africa have already been discussed — to advance through Bunyoro and then turn east to the coast to link up with McKillop, thus encircling Abyssinia and seizing the entire Horn of Africa for the Egyptian Empire. McKillop commenced work on his fort and briefly occupied the Swahili towns of Kismayu and Brava, but the Sultan of Zanzibar objected to his presence in what he considered to be his territory. War between Egypt and Zanzibar was averted by the British Consul in Zanzibar, Sir John Kirk, who persuaded Ismail to recall the expedition. The Khedive's wider territorial aims were soon abandoned because of a disastrous military defeat in Abyssinia, as

well as the obvious impossibility of Gordon even managing to subdue Bunyoro, let alone ever reaching the coast.

The withdrawal from Central Africa in 1878 was followed by the outbreak of the Mahdist revolt, which cut off the remaining Egyptian garrisons in Equatoria Province. After Gordon's departure these garrisons came under the command of the new governor, a German called Eduard Schnitzer, who had been Gordon's medical officer. Schnitzer, who had converted to Islam, was better known under his adopted name of Emin Pasha. He held out until 1889, when H.M. Stanley's 'Emin Pasha Relief Expedition' arrived and escorted him and those of his men who wished to accompany him to Zanzibar. Other members of the Egyptian garrisons — invariably referred to now as Sudanese — remained in Equatoria, at least nominally holding it in the name of the Khedive, until recruited into British service during the early 1890s.

Baker's and Gordon's Forces

The army which Baker led into the Bari country in 1871 consisted of two infantry regiments — one of Egyptian and one of Sudanese personnel — totalling 1,200 men, mostly armed with muzzle-loading rifles. There were also ten 8¼-pdr bronze field guns. The Egyptian regiment was sent home soon after their arrival, leaving only 250 Sudanese soldiers. In the following year Baker recruited 300 auxiliaries from among the Madi, who fought enthusiastically against the slavers. The artillery he describes as of little use in field operations because, although each piece weighed only 230 lbs (104 kg), they were almost impossible to transport along the local tracks. They were therefore relegated to the defence of entrenched camps, for which purpose they were loaded with case shot. The cutting edge of the expedition was provided by a small unit organised on the spot by Baker — the famous 'Forty Thieves'. This 'corps d'élite' was formed of picked men from both the Egyptian and the Sudanese regiments, and was in fact 48 strong, being kept up to strength by drafts from the rest of the army when required. These men were armed with Snider rifles and were given special training in marksmanship.

By the mid-1870s the entire Egyptian army was being issued with up to date Remington breech-loaders. In 1878 the missionary Felkin found all of Emin Pasha's men at Lado equipped with Remingtons, which they had kept in good condition, despite having received no supplies from Egypt for nearly two years. He describes the Egyptian headquarters at Dufile as well fortified, surrounded by a wooden stockade, and protected by three field guns. Gordon's steamers, the *Nyanza* and *Khedive*, had secured control of the Nile. At

Magungo on Lake Albert, which was also navigable by steamers, another fort incorporated a moat and extensive earthworks, with a field gun and two rocket tubes.

It might seem surprising that a well-equipped regular army consistently failed to subdue the poorly armed tribesmen of equatorial Africa, but neither Baker nor Gordon had much faith in the Egyptian troops they were given to command — with the exception of Baker's 'Forty Thieves', for whom he had nothing but praise. Gordon, who rapidly became depressed by his failure to pacify the Bari, considered that his own Egyptian officers and men were 'utterly bad', and 'all cowed' by their losses, especially by the massacre of de Bellefonds' party. 'The wretched black soldier', he concluded, 'is not a match for a native with spear and bow; the soldier cannot shoot, and is at the native's mercy, if the native knew it.' In another passage he describes the bayonet in the hands of his troops as useless against a skilful spearman. Baker on the whole concurs with this pessimistic view, but he saves most of his condemnation for the officer corps: 'It was a rule without exception', he says, 'that if I left an Officer with a certain duty to perform, it was neglected.'



Emin Pasha's Egyptian troops torturing Dervish prisoners. (Illustrated London News, 3 March 1890)

However, Baker makes a distinction between the rank and file from Egypt itself — who were reluctant soldiers, unused to the climate, and often secretly in sympathy with the slave-traders — and the Sudanese regiments. Many of the Sudanese in his expeditionary force had served under Marshal Bazaine in Mexico, in a unit which the Khedive had sent to support the French in 1867. These veterans, he

says, were 'far superior in esprit' to the ordinary Egyptian conscripts. Felkin praises the soldiers he saw in 1878 as 'brave and disciplined', but by that date the troops in Central Africa, including the officers, were almost exclusively Sudanese. The only Egyptians left were the artillerymen, but they suffered very badly from fever, and so were due to be replaced as soon as Sudanese gunners could be trained.

FIGURES

1. BARI WARRIOR The main source for this figure is an illustration based on one of Baker's sketches, published in the *Illustrated London News* in 1865. Like most of the tribes of the southern Sudan, the Bari did not wear clothing. This nakedness was so characteristic that Baker writes of a 'clothing frontier' at about latitude 4° north, in the Madi Mountains. South of this line, where the land rose towards the East African Highlands, the climate was cool enough to encourage the wearing of skins or bark cloth. To the north, as far as the Sudd marshes, was a wide band of country in which the natives went naked and had no use for trade cloth. A long clay pipe, and the low wooden stool which this man carries slung over his shoulder, were also typical of the tribes of the southern Sudan.

Many Bari encircled their stomachs and lower backs with a broad 'belt' of minute raised scars, and rubbed their entire bodies with red ochre — more for protection against the voracious local mosquitoes than as war-paint. The combination of scars and paint, says Baker, gave the appearance of a 'belt of fish-scales'. They shaved their hair, leaving only a small tuft on top of the head, to which they attached one or more feathers. Captain J.A. Grant, who observed the Bari in 1863, says that they often wore necklaces of crocodile teeth and the tusk of a wild pig tied above each elbow. Felkin, writing 20 years later, refers to necklaces of dog teeth, and says that a warrior who had killed a man or an elephant single-handed was allowed to wear an ivory ring on his arm.

The ivory trader John Petherick says that the typical Bari spearhead was longer and narrower than those of their neighbours, probably resembling that carried by the Luo warrior in Figure 82. This would not be surprising, as the Luo had originated from a homeland very close to the Bari country; but other sources describe a more conventional broad spearhead like that shown here. The shaft was sometimes fletched like an arrow to facilitate throwing, but this does not seem to have been particularly common. According to Grant the butt could also be fitted with an iron spike.

The Bari bow was about 6 ft (1.83 m) long, and made from bamboo. The barbed arrowheads were coated with poison obtained

from an unidentified country far to the west, which appears to have been far more effective than locally made concoctions. Baker says that the Bari used a weak draw, holding the arrow between the thumb and forefinger, and so did not make the best use of the power of their bows; in fact he calls them 'bad archers', and says that their maximum range was only about 110 yds (100 m), although this was actually quite respectable by African standards.

Detail 1a, from a late 19th-century German illustration, shows a variation on the feather headdress. The battle pictures in Baker's *Ismailia*, however, suggest that Bari warriors generally discarded their plumes when in battle. This would make sense in view of the tactics described by Baker, which involved much use of cover in order to approach as close as possible to the enemy undetected. Figure 1a has also apparently discarded his necklace of teeth in favour of beads acquired from traders.

2. LOTUKA WARRIOR c.1860 This figure is based mainly on a drawing in Baker's *The Albert Nyanza* of the Lotuka chief Commoro, who was his host in 1863. Baker admired the martial bearing of the Lotuka, whom he describes as tall (the sample he measured averaged 5 ft 11½ in, or 1.82 m), muscular, and very powerful, 'always ready for either a laugh or a fight'. 'Everything in Latooka', he concludes, 'looks like fighting'. Commoro, like all the adult men of the tribe, wears the characteristic Lotuka headdress. Baker gives a detailed description of how these 'exquisite helmets' were constructed. The basis for them was actually the warrior's own hair, woven together in successive layers with twine over a period of eight to ten years, until it formed a dense matted substance 'like a strong felt'. Rich men would then decorate the surface with beads, 'beautifully arranged in sections of blue and red', and a rim of white cowrie shells sewn around the bottom edge. The plate at the front was made of highly polished copper, or — by the 1890s at least — of brass from old cartridge cases. The whole arrangement was, of course, worn at all times, as it was permanently fixed to the head. The helmet's main function was to identify the wearer's tribe and to display his wealth and status, but clearly they would also have provided a certain amount of protection in battle, especially against the blows of wooden clubs.

Detail 2a, from another drawing in *The Albert Nyanza*, shows the white ostrich feather plumes which were often fixed to the helmet. These were detachable, and were probably only worn on special occasions. The original drawing depicts a funeral dance, but Baker's description implies that the plumes were worn on most important occasions, including, presumably, during pitched battles, if not in surprise raids for cattle.

Detail 2b is wearing a different style of helmet, in which the matted hair is covered entirely with brass plates instead of beads, and surmounted by a group of white ostrich feathers and a 'pompom' made of smaller black feathers. This is actually based on a photograph taken in the 1950s, but Emin Pasha's description of 'helmets of shining brass or copper plates' suggests that this new style was already in use when he wrote in the 1880s. Its adoption may have been encouraged by the greater availability of brass cartridges and other sources of metal: Emin states that by his time the Lotuka were acquiring supplies of brass from Zanzibar, via Uganda. This use of metal armour is unique in 19th-century East Africa. The gorget he wears is also of beaten brass.

Apart from the helmet, and perhaps some brass or copper rings around the neck and limbs, Lotuka warriors fought naked, although Emin implies that a man who killed a leopard (though not a lion, whose skin was never worn) might wear its pelt as a cloak. Emin's journals refer to 'the genuine Latuka people, recognisable by their slight figures and long faces — all nude, and adorned with iron ornaments, ivory rings on the upper arm, broad copper rings as necklaces'. According to Harry Johnston, by the end of the 19th century some Lotuka who had converted to Islam had begun to adopt Arab-style clothing, but this can have applied only to a minority, as the traditional costume (or lack of it) was still predominant well into the colonial period.

The spiked iron bracelet on this figure's right wrist could be used as a weapon when grappling with an enemy, or as a back-up if the spear was lost. The spikes, or 'knife-blades' as Baker describes them, were up to 4 in (100 mm) long and could inflict serious wounds. These unusual wrist weapons, and the similar Karamojong-type wrist-knives discussed under Figure 4, were characteristic of the Upper Nile region. It is possible that they were originally inspired by the razor-sharp dew-claws on the back of the lion's foreleg, which many tribes regarded as that animal's most dangerous weapons. Emin says that the lion was venerated by the Lotuka as a sort of totem animal, so if this theory is valid the idea may have originated with them.

The Lotuka did not use bows. The only other weapons shown in 19th-century illustrations are spears. Baker also refers to a long-bladed knife, and a mace, which apparently had a cylindrical iron head with a rim at the top like the 'cotton reel' type used by the Dodinga (see the caption to Figure 5). The original source for this illustration shows a shield of similar shape to that carried by Figure 4, but the picture conflicts with Baker's written account, which describes a much longer type. This suggests that the artist who produced the engraving from

the explorer's original sketches has made an error, and that the shield carried in Baker's day was actually the same as that shown here, which was associated with the tribe in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, and is well documented in 20th-century photographs. The unique 'rocket' shape was designed to cover the whole body, and had a narrow slit at the top to allow the bearer to see while still protecting his face. It was made of buffalo or giraffe hide — 'the latter being highly prized as excessively tough although light,' says Baker, 'and thus combining the two requisite qualities of a good shield'. Lotuka shields were traditionally bleached white, and unpatterned.

3. MADI OR ACHOLI WARRIOR The main figure is based principally on illustrations by Baker in his *The Albert Nyanza*. It is obvious from explorers' accounts that the Madi and Acholi were very similar in appearance, to the extent that it was often difficult to tell them apart. The Madi had few cattle, because of the tsetse fly which infested their country, and possibly for this reason they were poorly nourished and physically feeble compared to the Lotuka. A photograph by Buchta from later in the century shows a 'Madi tribesman' in a garment similar to that worn by Figure 9, but Baker says that when going to war they discarded this attire and fought entirely naked, although, because the weather was often chilly in the hills in which they lived, Obbo men might wear an antelope or goat skin draped across their shoulders. He adds that it was fashionable to wear a tuft from the tail of a horse or cow fastened to the elbow. This does not appear in his illustrations, but probably resembled the similar ornament worn by Figure 91. In the 1860s warriors of the Obbo Acholi painted their entire bodies in horizontal stripes of red and white or red and yellow. For dances and hunting, and possibly for war, the Moru painted their faces, shoulders, chests, and arms with half-inch wide stripes in red, blue, black, and white.

Fig 1



Fig 2



Fig 3

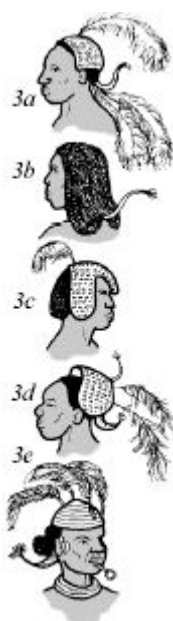


Fig 4



Each tribe or sub-tribe had a distinct hairstyle, which was often the only means of distinguishing between them. Detail 3a is an Obbo, from the same source as the main figure, and shows a similar style of matted and woven hair, with the addition of an extra ostrich plume. A thin piece of curved wood or bone is also attached to the back of the head, tipped with a tuft of hair (Baker says that a leopard's tail was highly prized for this purpose). Details 3b, c, d, and e are also from Baker. 3b represents a 'native of Madi' — a rather imprecise description. He could equally well be from the Lira group of the Acholi, whom Baker describes elsewhere as wearing their hair whitened with pipe-clay in a style resembling a barrister's wig. 3c and d are described as 'Obbo' and 'Shoggo' respectively, and wear the usual woven hair 'helmets', decorated with beads and feathers. In Obbo if not elsewhere these were bound at the edges with rawhide to keep their shape. Unlike the Lotuka 'helmets', however, they did not encase the whole of the head, and they must have been less effective as protection against blows. Detail 3e is a 'native of Lira', sketched while on a visit to Baker's camp on the border of Bunyoro. He wears a beaded and plumed 'helmet' even more reminiscent of those of the Lotuka. His lower lip is pierced with a crystal like that of Figure 5, and he might also have a similar little horn hanging around his neck as a charm.

J.A. Grant states that the Madi used spears 7 ft (2.1 m) long,

and bamboo bows bound with leather which probably resembled that of Figure 1. According to Felkin the Moru, who fought almost exclusively with bows, wrapped theirs in crocodile skin. Their reed arrows were unfletched, and the heads 'cruelly notched'. There were many designs of arrowhead, and Grant says that each man might carry ten arrows, each with a different shape of head designed for a different purpose. Felkin adds that they often had iron tips with separate barbs carved from hard wood.

The shield shown here is made of giraffe hide, and is obviously a variant on the Karamojong/Turkana style seen in Figures 4, 5, 89, 91, and 92. Felkin does not mention shields in his account of the Moru, but states that they protected their left hands with a 'woven string gauntlet' which covered the palm and fingers. The Acholi carried shields of similar shape to this one, but considerably larger. They were often painted in horizontal stripes — probably of red, white, and yellow, since these were the colours favoured for body paint.

By the 1880s many of the Acholi chiefs had adopted Arab dress. By this time the tribe had obtained large numbers of muskets, and even some breech-loading rifles. These were provided by the Banyoro, acquired by trade with the Turks, or possibly captured from the Egyptians. As early as 1874 Emin Pasha found that a breech-loader could be bought for four slaves. Acholi men who were equipped with firearms still retained their shields, and are described as kneeling to shoot from behind them, for protection against the missiles of spear and bow-armed opponents.

4. KARAMOJONG OR JIE WARRIOR This figure is based on a photograph taken by Major Powell-Cotton in 1904, at which time the Karamojong were still untouched by foreign influences. The related Jie were virtually identical in appearance. He is naked apart from metal rings on his arms, and strips of animal skin tied round his lower legs. Alternate generations of warriors were distinguished by the metal ornaments which they were permitted to wear: one was called 'yellow', and wore brass; while the following generation, known as 'red', used only copper. Ivory bracelets were also sometimes worn.

Karamojong warriors plastered their hair with clay to form a 'helmet' similar in shape to that of detail 3c. The clay was left unornamented, and was either grey in colour or reddened with ochre. This head-dress might extend well down the back, like that of Figure 91. It could provide useful protection against blows to the head. 'Karamoja' Bell once struck a hostile warrior with a club: 'I was fairly hefty, in good training, and meant all I knew. To my astonishment the native turned on me with a smile instead of dropping dead or at least

stunned, while the club flew to atoms. I had hit his shock-absorbing periwig ... I might as well have hit a Dunlop Magnum.' White ostrich feathers were fixed to the top of the head; their number apparently reflected the rank or seniority of the wearer, and might have been used to distinguish between age-sets in battle. Bell says that a warrior who had killed an enemy would wear a white feather 'dipped blood-red'. Among the Jie age-sets were apparently distinguished by different coloured feathers, especially red and black. Jie warriors might also paint their bodies with yellow clay. John Boyes, writing in the early 20th century, says that Karamojong warriors would carve a crescent-shaped scar on their arms for each enemy killed, while according to Bell the whole body might be tattooed — on the right side if the victim was a man, on the left if it was a woman. The Jie cut similar scars on the chest and shoulders.

This man's shield is made from the hide of a thick-skinned animal such as an elephant, buffalo, rhinoceros, or giraffe — the last being the most sought-after — and despite its small size would be fairly heavy. It is strengthened by a central wooden rib, which also served as a handgrip. This design was widespread in the region between the Upper Nile and Lake Rudolf, varying only in minor details among such peoples as the Karamojong, Jie, Acholi, Lango, Dodinga, Toposa, Samburu, and Turkana (see also Figures 5, 89, 91, and 92). The Karamojong do not appear to have painted theirs. Light wicker shields like a smaller version of the one carried by Figure 90 were used by boys for training.

He carries a light spear with a thin shaft, which could be up to 8 ft (2.4 m) long. Two spears were commonly carried, and could be used for either thrusting or throwing. Major Powell-Cotton describes how Karamojong warriors would advance in a series of rushes, kneeling behind their shields for cover when they halted, then throwing their spears when close enough. This warrior also wears a razor-sharp wrist-knife on his right arm. A variety of knives and hooks could also be worn on the fingers (see the illustration on page 20). All of these weapons were used in hand-to-hand combat in the same way as the spiked bracelet of Figure 2. In internal conflicts, the Jie abandoned these deadly weapons by mutual agreement, and fought each other only with whips and wooden sticks. Neither the Karamojong nor the Jie acquired large numbers of guns during this period. The latter sold most of the weapons captured at Caicaon to Swahili traders, and used those which they kept mainly to make a noise during their dances.

Detail 4a is a chief or warrior of a senior age-set, distinguished from his juniors by his larger and more numerous plumes, and by the fur cape around his shoulders. The latter could be made from the skin

of a leopard, aardwolf (cream or tawny, with irregular black stripes), or baboon (generally greyish olive or khaki coloured). One modern writer mentions the use of aardwolf skins as headdresses, but no 19th or early 20th-century source confirms this.

5. DODINGA OR LANGO WARRIOR The source for this figure is a series of drawings published in the *Illustrated London News* in October 1903, depicting Major Powell-Cotton's encounter with the Dodinga tribe. Like the Karamojong, they were still completely uninfluenced by the outside world at this time. Powell-Cotton says that all the Dodinga he met were 'well over six feet tall'. They carried one long spear like that shown here, and two shorter ones for throwing, all decorated with a tuft of hair below the head. Those whom he saw did not use finger knives or hooks. Many did have what he describes as 'knobkerries, with an iron head like a reel of cotton', but these are not illustrated. The shield is of a similar type to that of Figure 4, but slightly larger — 41 in (1.04 m) long according to Powell-Cotton — and decorated with a tuft of ostrich feathers on the bottom edge like that of Figure 91. Cow tails might also be suspended from the upper corners.

The surfaces of the shields seen by Powell-Cotton were undecorated, but an early 20th-century account of the related Toposa describes the use of a variety of shield patterns which were apparently specific to certain units, and which might be indicative of the sort of designs favoured by 19th-century warriors in this region: 'A stranger passing through the ranks could distinguish the different regiments by the emblazonments of their shields, the scarlet zigzag on a white ground which the Mogwath carried, the black bend on white carried by the Nologir, the crescent of the Ibunyo and the looped design in crimson and white adopted by the Peimong.'

This man's 'pudding bowl' haircut is daubed with clay and ornamented with circular patches of leather, on which are sewn white and red beads. This is by far the most common hairstyle in the pictures, but Powell-Cotton states that some warriors instead wore a single black or white ostrich feather, or occasionally a bunch of mixed colours, in their hair. His ear and neck rings are brass, the armlets brass or ivory, and he wears a string of white or red beads around his waist. Otherwise, he is naked.

Detail 5a shows the crystal pendant worn in the lower lip, and the small antelope-horn which every warrior hung around his neck; this apparently functioned as an amulet or charm as well as a musical instrument. The Dodinga scarred their faces, with two cuts on each cheek and one on the forehead.

From a description and woodcut in Speke's *Journal of the*

Discovery of the Source of the Nile, it is clear that many of the Lango (or Kedi, as he calls them) who fought with the Banyoro were virtually identical in appearance to this figure. However, a minority had hairstyles like that of detail 3a, which Speke says was made from other men's hair, as their own would not grow long enough. He does refer to a loincloth, but says that this was only worn by those men serving with the Banyoro army, and even then only when actually visiting the royal court. The Lango are said to have only adopted spears around 1800, before which they had used only clubs and buffalo-hide whips. By Speke's day they carried between five and ten spears each, which were usually thrown over or under the shield, using wrist action only. Some accounts speak of the Lango using bows and poisoned arrows, but J.H. Driberg, who studied the tribe in the early 20th century, was told that they had only ever used bows for hunting, and never in war. Their shields were of the typical Karamojong or Dodinga design, although before the adoption of the spear they apparently used much larger convex shields, each of which could shelter three men. According to Driberg the best materials for shield-making were, in descending order of toughness, the hides of buffalo, rhinoceros, elephant, giraffe, and crocodile. These preferences differ somewhat from those of the Karamojong, and may reflect a greater emphasis on strength rather than lightness. The shields were painted in horizontal stripes like those of the neighbouring Acholi, but were smaller, the Lango saying that the large Acholi types obstructed their vision and made it harder to throw their spears. Shield colours are not stated, but red and white are the most likely, as these were popular throughout the region and the dyes were easily obtainable.

6 & 7. BANYORO CHIEFS c.1862-72 Figure 6 is one of a delegation shown welcoming Baker on his first visit to Bunyoro in 1864. His dress is a single garment of bark cloth, or *mbugu* (a term which could be used either for the material or the garment), which Baker says could be 'arranged in various fashions', presumably at the whim of the wearer. Speke and Grant also saw men with pieces of *mbugu* tied around their heads. In its natural state this bark cloth came in various shades of reddish brown — some are even described as 'salmon pink' — but it was frequently dyed black, red, or in alternating stripes of these colours.

Figure 7, from Baker's *Ismailia*, dates from eight years later. His costume consists of a more voluminous *mbugu*, with a separate mantle thrown over his shoulders. This could be either bark-cloth or goatskin. He also has brass earrings and bracelets, and wears sandals. Baker describes King Kamrasi as wearing, instead of a *mbugu*, 'a fine mantle of black and white goat-skins', although a sketch made by Grant in

1862 shows the king dressed identically to Figure 6 except for a string of beads around his neck. Bunyoro was largely cut off from trade routes by hostile neighbours, which probably explains why beads were very scarce, although a minority of richer men might possess such necklaces. In the 1860s trade cloth was still unobtainable, and even cowrie shells — widely used elsewhere as currency and for decoration — had been unknown until a few years before Speke and Grant's visit.

The spear was the characteristic — in fact at this time almost the only — weapon of the Banyoro, although a knife might also be carried. When not in action the spearhead was customarily protected with a leather sheath, decorated at the tip with a tuft of hair from a cow's tail.

8. BANYORO CHIEF, LATE 19TH CENTURY By the 1870s many leading figures in Bunyoro had begun to adopt Arab fashions. This is King Kabarega's rival Rionga, shown greeting Baker in 1872. The explorer records that he had previously sent Rionga 'a beautiful cloak of gold brocade, together with a new tarboosh and sky-blue turban', and it is probably this outfit that is represented in the drawing. The other chiefs accompanying him are dressed in a more traditional manner, resembling Figure 7, but Arab costume became steadily more popular in subsequent decades, and the leaders who fought against the British in the 1890s looked very similar to this figure. A photograph from 1895 shows a minor chief in a white turban and Arab gown, in sharp contrast to his men, who are all wearing brown bark cloth.

Fig 5

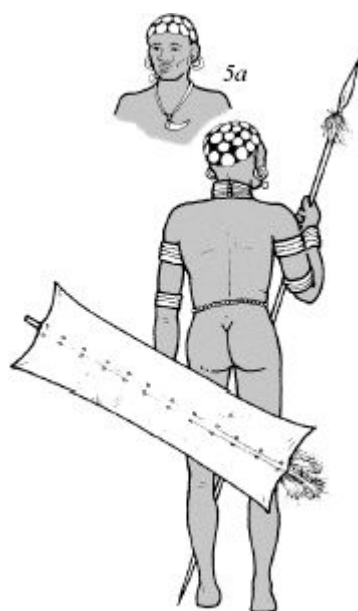


Fig 6



Fig 7



Fig 8



The percussion musket has been added to the original for this reconstruction, but by the 1870s would have been the favoured weapon of all Banyoro men wealthy enough to afford one. Firearms began to appear in the country early in the 1860s, and the chiefs often went to extraordinary lengths to acquire them. In 1862 Rionga sent ten slaves and ten elephant tusks to the Sudan to buy a single gun, but the trader Petherick refused to supply him for fear that the weapon might be used against Speke's expedition. At around the same time

King Kamrasi, having been presented with a gun, is said to have been so impressed that he declared that he would never again resort to his spear. By the late 1880s more modern weapons were already replacing these muskets, and most eminent men, as well as the royal guard or *bonosoora*, possessed either rifles or, equally popular, double-barrelled shotguns. In 1889 Stanley reported that Kabarega's arsenal of 1,500 guns included Jocelyn and Starr, Sharps, Snider, and Martini-Henry rifles, the last being more up to date than anything which the British could bring against him at this time. Kabarega owned a famous repeating rifle (probably a Winchester) called 'Bagwigairebata', which could fire 17 shots without reloading. It was with this weapon that he killed the Baganda commander at the Battle of Rwengabi (see p.25).

It is not always easy to reconcile these facts with the ineffectiveness of firearms in the hands of most African armies. The numbers imported were very large (as early as 1860 one European firm alone was selling 13,000 guns a year) but their impact on African warfare was much less than such figures might suggest, mainly because most of the weapons sold to Africans were of very poor quality — either worn out and obsolete military surplus, or specially manufactured 'trade guns'. In 1845 a writer in Birmingham criticised the city's gunsmiths for exporting 'horribly dangerous' weapons made of unfit iron, and pointed out that while a good quality musket cost 16s to make, 'African guns' were being produced for 5s 3½d. Even so, Birmingham-made guns were regarded as better than those from the city's main competitor, Liège. In a report written in 1888, the British consul-general at Zanzibar claimed that these 'cheap and worthless' trade weapons were deliberately designed to wear out after two or three years. In fact another observer stated in 1873 that most of the ones he saw were kept only for show, and had obviously never been fired. Africa was also a dumping ground for inferior flints, which sold for 2s per thousand, compared to 5s a thousand for the type considered acceptable in Europe. Later in the century cheap and inferior copies of more modern weapons were manufactured specifically for the African market. Hiram Maxim claimed that in the 1890s a factory in Spain was even producing counterfeit Winchesters.

Furthermore, African warriors — apart from those in the service of European armies — seldom received proper training in the use of their guns, and shared the usual tendency of inexperienced shooters to fire too high. Aiming high was often necessary with the low muzzle velocities which the poor quality powder produced, but those who adopted this habit might be even less accurate when they acquired more modern weapons if they did not realise the need to compensate for the flatter trajectory. Africans often compounded the disadvantages of muzzle-loaders by ramming in enormous charges of

powder. This not only risked bursting the barrel, but the recoil would make it painful or even dangerous to hold the gun to the shoulder in order to aim properly. The Austrian explorer Ludwig von Hohnel once borrowed a porter's gun to finish off a wounded zebra and was nearly killed by the unexpected recoil. He later swore that he would never again use a weapon which had been loaded by a native.

Fig 9



Fig 10



Fig 11



9 & 10. BANYORO WARRIORS Another of Baker's drawings from his 1864 expedition shows him accompanied by an escort of warriors dressed in this bizarre fashion, which he describes as follows: 'The entire crowd were most grotesquely got up, being dressed in either

leopard or white monkey skins, with cows' tails strapped on behind, and antelopes' horns fitted upon their heads, while their chins were ornamented with false beards, made of the bushy ends of cows' tails sewn together ... They were perfect illustrations of my childish ideas of devils — horns, tails, and all, excepting the hoofs.' Warriors in similar costumes are also shown in Baker's illustrations of his battle at Masindi in 1872. These men were probably members of the *bonosoora*, but we are not told whether this outfit was exclusive to them.

Many of the rank and file fought in their usual civilian dress, a *mbugu* of the type worn by Figure 6. Other spearmen wore animal hides, but lacked the horns and false beards, thus resembling Figure 10 — also from Baker — who has draped himself in the entire skin of a leopard, complete with tail. The garment could apparently be fastened over either shoulder according to the wearer's personal preference. To Speke, the Banyoro were 'squalid-looking ... a wild set of ragamuffins ... and anything but prepossessing to our eyes'. He refers to 'the soldier's badge — a piece of *mbugu* or plantain-leaf tied round their heads', but neither his nor Baker's illustrations show this, and it may have been a field-sign worn for a specific campaign — probably against Rionga's men, who were otherwise dressed identically — rather than a regular part of the equipment. According to most authorities, even in the campaigns of the 1890s most of the Banyoro fought in their traditional skins or bark cloths, in contrast to their Baganda enemies, many of whom had by then adopted white cotton robes. However, Lieutenant Vandeleur, writing of the campaign of 1895, several times refers to the *bonosoora* as 'white-robed', so it seems likely that members of this elite unit were in advance of their fellows in adopting Arab fashions. By the late 1870s they were also equipped mainly if not exclusively with firearms. In 1889, a group of Emin Pasha's men encountered a column of *bonosoora* armed with rifles and marching 'in a pretty disciplined manner' with two flags at their head. Large numbers of flags were apparently carried by Banyoro armies of this period. Unfortunately our sources do not describe them in detail, but they probably resembled the Arab flags which originally inspired them.

11 & 12. 'TURKS' Both these figures are derived from an illustration in J.H. Speke's *Journal of the Discovery of the Source of the Nile* showing a band of ivory traders encountered on the Upper Nile in 1862. In fact they were mostly Arabs, although many other nationalities might be included in their number. Baker mentions Syrians, Copts, Circassians, and even a few Europeans like the Maltese Andrea de Bono, who was technically a British subject.

Figure 12's voluminous hooded cloak is a Sudanese fashion

apparently being worn by both men and women in this group. Others in the party are dressed similarly to Figures 20, 23, and 24, and it is not likely that the Arabs from Khartoum could have been easily distinguished from Arabs from Zanzibar. In fact, shortly after the visit of Speke and his Zanzibari followers to Bunyoro, a column of 'Turks' from the Sudan entered the country by deception, being mistaken for colleagues of Speke. Captain Grant says that of the men he and Speke saw, 'no two were dressed alike'. Their leader had a red jacket and loose Turkish trousers like those of Figure 11, and a fez with a silk turban wound round it. His second-in-command wore a green jacket decorated with black braid, a tasselled fez, and gaiters, presumably similar to those of Figure 17. Yellow coats are also frequently mentioned. The fezzes would have been the usual red colour.

Most if not all of the 'Turkish' slavers carried flintlock or percussion muskets, which were in fact the only real advantage they possessed over their victims. Figure 11 is armed with a scimitar of Persian type, but others carried a straight, double-edged sword with a cross piece on the hilt. According to Petherick they never thrust with these weapons, as warfare among the Arabs themselves was waged with the aim of minimising blood feuds by maiming their opponents rather than killing them. Therefore they employed only wild slashes which were very easily parried. Baker had an amusing encounter with Arab swordsmanship in a skirmish in which he, his wife, and a handful of servants of both sexes disarmed half a dozen attackers. The fight took place under an overhanging tree which hampered the Arabs' attempts to wield their swords overhead and made them easy victims, Baker even disposing of one of them with his umbrella!

Horses did not survive long in this fly-infested region, so those Turks who could afford them preferred donkeys and oxen as riding animals. Camels were used to carry loads, but were seldom ridden. Petherick says that the habit of riding specially trained oxen was introduced by the Baggara (or 'cow') Arabs from further north, but that none of the local tribes of the southern Sudan adopted the habit, even though they possessed plenty of cattle. In fact it was a common practice in southern parts of Africa, where Livingstone and other explorers copied it. Baker and his wife often rode similar beasts, which they acquired from the Arabs.

Baker's own followers on his 1863 expedition were recruited in the Sudan, and an illustration in his book shows them in costumes very similar to that of Figure 11, but without the tassel on the fez. Their employer tried to dress them as uniformly as possible, and at one stage the clothing of the entire expedition, including Baker himself, was dyed dark brown. He equipped all of his personal servants at his own expense with double-barrelled guns.

13. ARAB OR TURKISH STANDARD BEARER One difference between the slavers from the north and those based on the east coast was in the flags which accompanied their caravans. This man, also from Speke's book, is carrying a long, spear-tipped staff bearing the Egyptian flag. This was identical to that of the Ottoman Empire to which Egypt still theoretically belonged — a white star and crescent on a red ground. The same flag was used by all expeditions which were either actually or nominally in the service of the Khedive of Egypt, including those led by Baker and Gordon to Bunyoro in the 1870s; the garrisons formerly commanded by Emin Pasha, cut off in Equatoria Province by the Mahdist Revolt, still had their 'torn and riddled' flags when Lugard visited them in 1891. The number of stars accompanying the crescent varied (that carried at the head of Stanley's Emin Pasha Relief Expedition in 1890 bore three), but one seems to have been the most common.

Fig 12

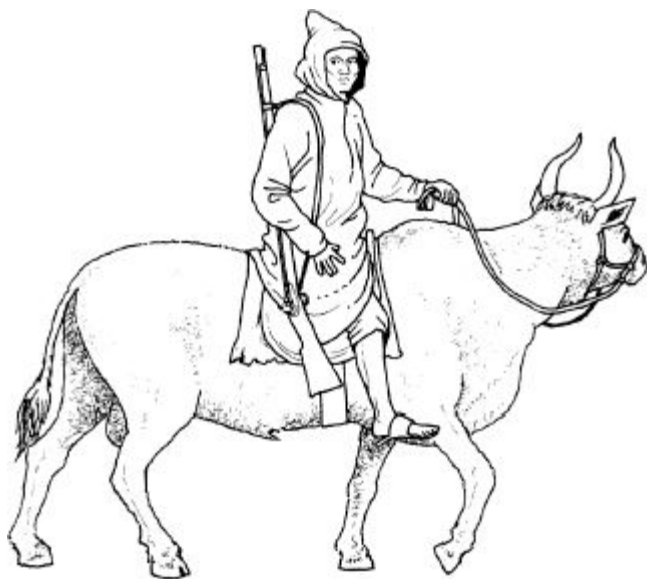


Fig 13



Fig 14



14. SAMUEL BAKER 1864 Baker is shown here in the rather old-fashioned costume in which he entered Bunyoro in 1864. His weapon is a 4-bore (i.e., 1.052-inch calibre) muzzle-loading elephant gun. Baker was a powerfully built man, and habitually used guns which would have been too heavy for most men to shoot. (The heaviest of all was called by the Arabs 'the child of a cannon', abbreviated by Baker to 'Baby'. It fired a half-pound — roughly 225 gm — shell, and the recoil was so ferocious that even he was afraid to fire it!) These muzzle-loaders could be charged with various types of ammunition, in addition to the usual solid lead shot intended for thick-skinned game. On one occasion Baker proposed to beat off hostile tribesmen by loading a 4-bore with 40 lead slugs and using it as a giant shotgun. In the event the weapon was not needed, but it would no doubt have had a devastating effect at close range. In Bunyoro in 1872 he often resorted to engaging half-seen ambushers with explosive shells from such an elephant gun.

Of all the explorers of East Africa, Baker probably made the most lasting impression on the local tribes. He was popular because of his victory over the slavers, and respected because of his fighting prowess. One of his own servants later gave this verdict: 'When he fought, he was always to the front; when he fired he never missed; he was indeed a man!'

Detail 14a shows the stiff leather cap which the eccentric but practical Baker had made to his own design in Khartoum for his first

expedition, and generally wore when riding. (He took several horses on this expedition, but when they eventually died he resorted to an ox.) It was made of palm leaves sewn together and covered with tanned leather, and was not only waterproof, but solid enough to protect his head in the event of a fall. It also doubled as a pillow, and kept his cartridges dry through several torrential rainstorms.

15. SAMUEL BAKER 1872 On his return to Bunyoro in 1872 Baker was leading an official expedition on behalf of the Egyptian government, but he continued to wear civilian dress in the field. A picture in his book *Ismailia* shows him once again entering Bunyoro, dressed in this rather more conventional explorer's outfit, probably in white, with a sun helmet instead of the famous cap. Other pictures from the same source show the cloth or leather band around the helmet. He is armed with a double-barrelled breech-loading rifle, one of several hunting weapons which he took with him and used to considerable effect in combat against the Bari and Banyoro.

16. EGYPTIAN OFFICER 1870s This figure is from the same source as 15, and shows one of Baker's Egyptian officers in his dark blue dress uniform, with silver or gold lace, red fez, red rank chevrons, and black leather equipment, complete with sword, which was worn to impress local chiefs. A white outfit similar to that of Figure 17, with rank chevrons, would probably have been worn in the field.

17. EGYPTIAN SOLDIER 1870s This infantryman is based on a sketch published in the *Illustrated London News* in June 1882. It actually depicts troops based in Egypt, but would equally well fit the descriptions of the men who accompanied Baker and Gordon to Central Africa in the previous decade. He might be of either Egyptian or Sudanese origin; the black Sudanese were regarded as more reliable, and invariably predominated in expeditionary forces sent into Central Africa. His fez is red, and his jacket, trousers, and gaiters white.

Baker's 'Forty Thieves' are illustrated wearing Egyptian uniform, but with a red flannel shirt like that of Figure 18, issued specially for the campaign by Baker, instead of the white jacket. Baker says that they sometimes added a 'cobalt blue' turban wrapped around the fez — perhaps as a parade uniform — or wore an Arab-style *khefia* or 'sun-cloth', probably in white, instead of their fezzes. This elite unit was so feared by the Bari and other tribes that the rest of the expeditionary force which advanced to Bunyoro eventually copied the red shirt. Like other Egyptian troops on campaign, however, Baker's men soon abandoned much of their equipment, and probably came to resemble Figure 18 in most respects. Red uniforms continued to be

worn by Egyptian and Sudanese troops in Central Africa, however, at least on formal occasions. Colonel Linant de Bellefonds, who was sent by Gordon to King Mtesa of Buganda in 1875, described how he prepared for a royal audience by dressing his men in red tunics and white 'pantaloon', with cartridge boxes covered in leopard skin.

18. EGYPTIAN SOLDIER IN CAMPAIGN DRESS 1870s–1880s Other illustrations of the period show the appearance of Egyptian soldiers actually on campaign in Central Africa. Even in the 1870s they were cut off from resupply for long periods, and were forced to adopt many items of local manufacture in place of the regulation uniform. Felkin found the garrison of Magungo, on Lake Albert, still in 'spotless white uniforms' in 1878, but he adds that on campaign they wore 'brown clothes' and generally went barefoot. What is meant by 'brown clothes' is unclear; it is possible that the white uniforms were dyed to make them less conspicuous, or more probably that the men had made new outfits from the local Banyoro bark-cloth.

After the Mahdist conquest of the Sudan the surviving garrisons were completely isolated, and their equipment diverged more and more from that of the regular army. A picture in Mounteney-Jephson's account of the Emin Pasha Relief Expedition, depicting a mutiny of the Pasha's Sudanese troops in 1889, gives a plausible impression of their appearance which has been used in this reconstruction. The main differences from Figure 17 are this man's white collarless shirt and bare feet. He has also abandoned his pack, carrying only a cartridge box slung over his shoulder, but retains the red fez. By the 1890s Emin Pasha's surviving Sudanese were even less military in their appearance (see Figures 110 to 112).

The standard rifle of the Egyptian army by this time was the single-shot breech-loading Remington. Baker, however, believed that the rate of fire and stopping power of long-ranged rifles were inadequate for fighting in dense bush country, where attacks could be delivered from very close range, and in a lecture delivered in 1873 he set out in detail how he believed troops should be armed for this type of warfare. One company per regiment would carry Sniders, while the others would be issued with 'single barrelled breech-loader smooth bores of No. 10 calibre', in other words shotguns, firing cartridges each containing a bullet and 24 small shot. This recommendation seems never to have been acted upon, but Baker did issue smoothbore muskets loaded with buckshot instead of Sniders to men on sentry duty at night, and describes the experiment as entirely successful.



Fig 16



Fig 17

Fig 18



ZANZIBAR AND THE SWAHILI COAST

THE ARABS OF ZANZIBAR

The history of the Arabs on the East African coast goes back more than a thousand years, but the Sultanate of Zanzibar, which during the 19th century came to dominate the entire region, had a much more recent origin. It was founded by Seyyid Said, who became Sultan (or Imam) of Oman in 1806, and transferred his capital from Muscat to Zanzibar in 1832. It was not, in fact, until after Seyyid's death in 1856 that Zanzibar became legally independent of Oman. The Omani Arabs had led the Muslim coalition which drove the Portuguese from the northern part of the coast in the 17th century, and they had since become the leading naval and trading power in the Indian Ocean. The city states along the coast of what were to become Kenya and Tanganyika were all nominally subject to the Sultan, but in practice by 1800 their Swahili inhabitants — mainly the descendants of local Africans, who had been converted to Islam and partially Arabised — had long since become independent.

The island of Zanzibar had been only an outpost of the Omani empire until Seyyid Said set up his capital there, but it was already a thriving centre of the slave trade, as well as being strategically well placed to control the three caravan routes which led inland from various points along the coast. These ran from Kilwa in the south towards Lake Nyasa; from Bagamoyo, on the mainland opposite Zanzibar, to Lake Tanganyika via the land of the Nyamwezi in the centre; and in the north — the last route to be fully developed — from Mombasa towards Lake Victoria and Buganda. Nevertheless, before Seyyid Said's reign the city's military strength was negligible. A French traveller who was there in 1799 reported that the governor appointed by the Sultan in Muscat was more afraid of internal coups than any outside threat, so he divided authority among his followers to prevent anyone becoming too powerful, and gave short-term military commands to a succession of his eunuch slaves. The merchants of the city relied for protection against the hostile tribes of the mainland on the Sultan's impressive, though by that time obsolescent, fleet of warships.

Seyyid Said eventually succeeded in establishing at least nominal authority over the Swahili along the whole of the East African coast as far south as Kilwa, and went on to plan several even more ambitious campaigns. Among these was a naval assault on Mozambique in 1828, which was intended to expel the Portuguese

from the whole of East Africa. He asked the American trader Edmund Roberts to supply him with heavy artillery for this operation, but British diplomacy thwarted the scheme. Five years later he hatched another plan to acquire troops from Madagascar for a war against Swahili rebels. He offered to marry Queen Ranavalana in return for the loan of 2,000 Hova soldiers, who had been trained and equipped by the British in the 1820s as part of their campaign against the slave trade, but the soldiers, although promised, never arrived. From this period onwards, however, British influence became a major factor in the politics of Zanzibar. As early as 1822 the first of a series of treaties designed to restrict the slave trade was forced on the Sultan by Captain Moresby, who commanded the Royal Naval flotilla at Mauritius. A British Consulate was established in 1841, and 20 years later, following the death of Seyyid Said, the Governor-General of India settled a succession dispute by personally appointing the new Sultan, Majid. By the 1860s, therefore, Zanzibar was in effect a client state of Britain. In 1890, after the Germans had occupied most of the Sultan's possessions on the mainland, the city and its island became a formal British Protectorate.



ARAB MILITARY ORGANISATION

The City of Zanzibar

The main defensive system of the city was the ‘Gurayza’ or fort, which was built of coral cemented together with lime. Richard Burton visited it in 1857 and described it as ‘one of those naive, crenellated structures flanked by polygonal towers, each pierced for one small gun, and connected by the comparatively low curtains, in which our ancestors put their trust’. He says that the embrasures in a detached battery commanding the seaward approach were so narrow that the concussion of the battery’s own guns would blow down the wall if they were ever fired, and that in any case the guns were too badly sited to be used effectively. Obviously the fort was designed like a castle of the pre-gunpowder era, with relatively thin, vertical stone walls, and was considered adequate to resist a siege by ill-equipped tribesmen or local rebels, although — as Burton clearly anticipated — it proved useless against modern artillery. In 1857 the fort’s own artillery consisted of two dozen rusty old iron carronades, a few odd guns of different calibres, and some ‘fine old brass pieces’ brought from Arabia, which had been captured from the Portuguese in the 17th century. The guns of all the Zanzibari forts were often very old, and their ammunition was of poor quality: Burton writes of ‘honeycombed cannon and rusty matchlocks’.

Zanzibar’s first permanent garrison consisted of 250 Arabs who accompanied Seyyid Said from Oman in 1827. In 1834 Captain Hart of HMS *Imogene* reported that there were ‘about two or three hundred troops’ supported by ‘a great number of police armed with spears’, the latter being presumably local Swahili. Thereafter the strength of the Sultan’s standing army steadily increased. Burton says that in 1846 it was 400 strong in all, made up of 80 men at Zanzibar, 250 at Mombasa (which had a history of rebellion), 30 at Lamu, 25 at Pate, and between six and ten at Kilwa, plus a few other tiny garrisons. It is obvious that some of these detachments were far too small to be of any military significance, even though by the late 1850s their numbers had roughly doubled, and Burton implies that their main function was to ‘show the flag’, and serve as a guard of honour for visiting dignitaries if required.

In time of war the regular soldiers were supplemented by more numerous irregulars, many of whom were mercenaries. These were of various origins, including Haiduks from Turkey, Albanians from Egypt, Syrians, and Arabians, as well as the 'Baluchis' who are discussed below. Other irregular troops were the retainers of locally based Arab clans, whom Seyyid Said had allowed to keep their own private armies. The most powerful of these clans, the al-Harthi, had 800 adult male members in 1859, all of whom could theoretically be called upon to fight. In addition its chief, Abdullah bin Salim, possessed 1,500 armed slaves. The Sultan was so nervous about the power of the al-Harthi that he took Abdullah with him as a hostage whenever he visited Oman. Nevertheless, Colonel Rigby, writing in 1860, thought that these clan troops had deteriorated to the point where they were ineffective, describing them as 'all arrant cowards'.

The native population of Zanzibar island was composed of two tribes, both of mixed African and Arab descent: the Hadimu and the Tumbatu. The Hadimu had once been ruled by a king known as the *Mwenyi Mkuu*, or 'great lord'. After Seyyid Said's arrival he lost most of his power but retained considerable unofficial influence, as traditionally only he could rally the Hadimu in time of war. They were not usually called upon to fight, although in 1859 the tribal levy was mobilised to oppose a threatened invasion from Oman. After the death of the *Mwenyi Mkuu* Sultan Hamadi in 1865 the office lost most of its authority, and in 1873 the title died out.

The Baluchis

By the middle of the century the core of the Sultan's army consisted of mercenary matchlockmen who were collectively known as Baluchis, although in reality they were recruited from various parts of Arabia, Persia, and India. Burton is typically scathing about their qualities as soldiers. He says that they were originally beggars and labourers from Arabia and Makran (south-eastern Persia), whose fighting ability was negligible, but who were preferred to Arabs as they were more amenable to discipline: 'Sultan Bin Hamid, the father of the late Sayyid Said, first conceived the bright idea of putting matchlocks into their hands, and of dubbing them Askar, or soldiers, as a slight upon his less docile compatriots.' If correct, this would mean that they were founded at the very beginning of the 19th century, or even before. By the time of Burton's visit in the 1850s the Baluchis were regularly entrusted with the most important missions, including the provision of armed escorts for European explorers for whose safety the Sultan might be held responsible. However, they did not particularly impress Burton: 'As men at arms', he says, 'one and all deserved to wear the

wooden spoon: I saw the whole garrison of Kaole firing for an hour, without effect, at a shell, stuck on a stick, distant about a dozen paces'. On the other hand he describes them as good swordsmen (a real compliment coming from Burton, who had written the definitive book on swordsmanship), and repeats a Zanzibari saying to the effect that one Baluchi soldier was worth two Arabs. He concludes that although they were unreliable in open battle, 'behind walls they are a match for a nation of savages'.

Burton goes on to say that in the 1850s the small Zanzibari 'forts' on the mainland which were garrisoned by the Baluchis were no more than huts surrounded by a fence, with a couple of firing platforms inside for the matchlockmen. The garrison commanders, known as 'Jemadars', usually falsified their strength returns in order to embezzle the surplus wages, so that the Sultan seldom knew the true manpower situation outside the capital. For example, Burton found one post occupied by only two soldiers, 'who figure on the muster-rolls as twenty men'. Joseph Thomson, who was accompanied by an escort of Baluchis on his and Keith Johnston's 1878 expedition, complains that 'there seemed to be literally no discipline among them'. In 1881 he reported that the Baluchis had been disbanded, but in fact many individuals continued to serve in the Sultan's forces for the rest of the century.

The Zanzibari regular army

In 1873 Sultan Barghash, who had come to the throne in 1870, was finally forced by the British to close the notorious slave market at Zanzibar, although the trade continued to flourish elsewhere along the coast until the end of the century. In 1877 Britain agreed to help him establish a regular army along European lines, mainly in the hope of strengthening his control of the coastal Arab towns which were tempted to defy his edicts against the slave trade. A Lieutenant Mathews RN was seconded from HMS *London* to raise and train this force, which was recruited mainly from local Swahili conscripts. In 1879 Thomson reported that it was very easy to acquire porters at Zanzibar, as all the local 'idlers' were eager to volunteer in order to avoid being drafted into the army. Initially numbering about 370 men, this force was divided into four companies. The men were equipped with Snider rifles supplied by Britain, as well as seven light Whitworth field pieces. Zanzibari officers and NCOs were appointed, but expeditions were usually placed under the command of a British officer. Mathews himself remained in command and eventually received permission from the Admiralty to enter the Sultan's service officially with the rank of Brigadier-General. He was subsequently

promoted to the post of the Sultan's Chief Minister, and the day-to-day command of the army was taken over by another British officer, Brigadier-General Hatch.

By 1880 there were 1,300 fighting troops, although ten years later their number had diminished to about 860. They were organised as a single battalion, divided into 12 rifle companies and a band. In 1895, worried that the army's main loyalty was to the British rather than to himself, Sultan Hamid set up a personal bodyguard unit as a counterbalance. This was formed from slaves commanded by British-trained Swahilis, and by 1896 was about 1,200 strong. It was disbanded after the short war with the British in August the same year.

Most Europeans regarded the Zanzibar regular army as little more than a parade unit. In 1881 Thomson found the 'New Soldiers' 'admirably drilled and organised', but 12 years later Sir Gerald Portal was less happy with the 200 volunteers who escorted him to Uganda: 'the laziest, most hopelessly and repulsively dirty, and the most untrustworthy collection of men with whom it had ever been our misfortune to come in contact'; they were 'almost useless' as fighting troops. In fact they did operate successfully against rebel Swahili forces during the 1880s and 1890s, often in co-operation with the British. After the war of August 1896 they were relegated to garrison duty in the city, supplemented by Indian troops from British East Africa.

THE SWAHILI

The term 'Swahili' is derived from the Arab word *suahel*, or shore, and describes all of the semi-Arabised (and mainly Muslim) Africans of the coastal regions of East Africa, whatever their ancestry. By the mid-19th century they had incorporated many slaves or ex-slaves who had originally been taken by force from the interior, but who seldom if ever returned to their countries of origin, even if given the opportunity. Before the extension of Zanzibari power the natives of the coast were divided into numerous independent city states, which fought frequent wars among themselves. The surviving Arabic chronicles of some of these city states paint a romanticised picture of their style of warfare, involving formal challenges, leisurely sieges, and the occasional pitched battle. This appears hardly to have changed at all between the Middle Ages and the first decades of the 19th century, although it is hard to tell how far this is due to the literary style in which the chronicles were written. It does seem that surprise attacks were an accepted stratagem: one renowned leader of the early 19th century was known as Hubub al Ghabshah, or 'dawn

tempest', because of his preference for attacking at dawn.

Traditionally the Swahili were divided into 12 'tribes', based on their supposed towns of origin. These tribes were: Mombasa, Mtwapa, Kilifi, Pate, Shaka, Faza, Akatwa, Gunya, Junda, Kilindini, Tangana, and Changamwe. They did not necessarily form a subordinate class to the Arabs, but had their own ancient aristocracy, known as the Shirazi, after the town of Shiraz on the coast near Lamu. The most prominent noble family, and the leaders of resistance to the Sultan's authority, were the Mazruis of Mombasa, who ironically were also of Omani origin. The common people were known as the 'Mahadimu'; the term 'Wangwana', meaning 'freemen', was often used instead, although many of the so-called freemen were technically slaves. Burton calculated that in the 1850s there were between 300,000 and 500,000 Swahili altogether, but their military power was much less than these numbers might suggest. Apart from being disunited, the Swahili were mostly farmers and merchants, and they did not have a good reputation as soldiers. Burton, like many other writers, dismisses them as 'cowardly' and 'unreliable'. According to J.H. Speke they were physically powerful, and often brave under a leader who could inspire their loyalty, but tended to be lazy and impulsive.

The Mazrui Wars

The Mazruis of Mombasa had been subject to the Sultans of Oman until 1750, when they took advantage of a change of dynasty in Muscat to assert their independence. They then extended their territory along the coast as far as the island of Pemba, which provided Zanzibar with much of its food, but by the time Seyyid Said came to the throne they were already in decline. This was mainly a result of a series of wars, both among themselves and against rival Swahili towns. In 1822 they were expelled from Pemba, and in 1828 the Zanzibaris seized the town of Mombasa itself, although the Mazruis still held out in the old Portuguese stronghold of Fort Jesus. In 1824, rather than submit to the Sultan, they had asked the British authorities in Bombay to take over Mombasa, and Captain Owen of HMS *Leven* actually negotiated a treaty which would have made the town a British possession. His superiors repudiated this, however, in order not to antagonise Seyyid Said. In 1837 Rashid bin Salim, the former Mazrui ruler of Mombasa, finally came to terms with the Arabs. At first he was retained as governor of the town under the Sultan, but Seyyid later had him and other leading members of the clan seized by treachery and either starved to death or thrown overboard from a ship. Not surprisingly this left a legacy of bitterness, which gave rise to several more Mazrui revolts over the next 60 years.

Some sections of the clan remained effectively independent even after the fall of Mombasa, notably at Gazi, on the coast 30 miles south of the city, and at Takaungu, the same distance away to the north. In 1850, and again in 1865, the Mazruis of Gazi, led by Mbarak, the son of Rashid bin Salim, tried to conquer Takaungu, but were defeated on both occasions with the help of Zanzibari troops. Mbarak was allowed to remain in command at Gazi, however, and continued to stir up unrest until 1873, when the Zanzibaris stormed his stronghold at Mwele and drove him into hiding.

In 1882 he returned to Mwele and launched his most serious rebellion at the head of an army of 2,000 men recruited from a number of local tribes, including the Seguhha, Zaramo, and Masai. He attacked the coastal town of Vanga, but another army sent from Zanzibar under Brigadier-General Mathews besieged him in Mwele and eventually took the place by assault. Mbarak escaped, but later surrendered to Mathews and was once again allowed to return to Gazi. He remained quiet until 1895, when he found himself caught up in another war — this time against the British (see p.165).

The Sultan's troubles with other Swahili tribes also continued after the fall of Mombasa. In 1843 Bwana Mtakha, chief of Sewi near Lamu, rebelled. Seyyid Said sent his son Khalid with an army of about 1,300 Arabs and Swahili. They had some artillery, but the musketeers were provided with only five cartridges each. Bwana Mtakha's men were drawn from the Gunya tribe. According to Burton, these were 'a fierce race of savages', of mixed Swahili, Arab, and Somali descent. They carried spears, which Burton says were like those of the Masai (see Figure 74), and had standards decorated with 'the dried and stuffed spoils of men', which sounds like a euphemism for the Somali habit of displaying their enemies' severed testicles. The first Gunya charge swept the Zanzibaris away, and all their artillery was captured (though Bwana Mtakha could not afford powder for the guns, and later sent them back as part of a peace deal). In the following year another Zanzibari force under Hamad bin Ahmad was ambushed and destroyed in the same area.

The Battle of Shela, c.1816

The Battle of Shela is worth examining because of its contribution to the weakening of the Mazruis on the eve of their struggle with the Zanzibaris. It is also of interest because for once the narratives in the Arabic chronicles can be supplemented by the accounts of eyewitnesses. The date of the battle is uncertain, but it probably took place between 1812 and 1816. It was fought between the city state of Pate, in alliance with the Mazruis, and the rival town of Lamu. In

accordance with an old tradition of arranged battles between the Swahili states, the Mazruis had warned Lamu in advance that they were coming. They and their Pate allies landed from a fleet of 'dhows' at Shela on Lamu Island, and two witchdoctors sacrificed a dog and a chicken on the beach to make 'favourable medicine' for the attack (a local practice which conversion to Islam had obviously not eradicated).

The chronicle of Pate claims that a Lamu sorcerer neutralised the enemy's magic with a more powerful spell, but according to a more prosaic recollection by an eyewitness two matchlockmen went forward from the Lamu lines and shot both the enemy witchdoctors. Freeman-Grenville, who collected this story at the beginning of the 20th century, states that the shore where the allies landed consisted of deep mud, and suggests that they must have been scattered and exhausted after scrambling ashore through the mud and then charging up the steep sand dunes of Shela. There is therefore no need for supernatural explanations for their rapid defeat by the Lamu men. Both sides fought with spears, swords, and bows, as well as matchlocks.

As their attack lost momentum and they began to fall back, the Mazrui and Pate soldiers found that their ships had been stranded by the ebbing tide. Many were consequently killed by the pursuing enemy before they managed to escape. The survivors then sailed to another part of the island and cut down coconut palms to build a fortified camp, but after being besieged there for a few days they gave up the campaign and sailed home. The Pate chronicle tells of 'great mourning' at both Pate and Mombasa because of the number of dead.

THE INLAND ARABS

Little is known about many of the earliest Arab pioneers in the interior of East Africa, but on virtually every route which Europeans explored they found that the Arabs had preceded them. Their main motivation was the search for slaves and ivory. The two businesses were largely complementary, since captives were often ransomed for tusks, and the prisoners who were used to carry the ivory back to the coast could themselves be sold on arrival. Harry Johnston describes the Arab methods in terms reminiscent of those used by Baker in his account of the 'Turks' in the Sudan: they would befriend a local chief, provide him with guns and assist him against his enemies, then enslave the defeated tribes and drive their victims down to the coast. Hamed bin Muhammad, alias Tippu Tib, who became the richest and most powerful of all the Zanzibari slaving magnates, claimed to have pioneered this brutal system on one of his first trips in the late 1860s,

but it had been operating in some form ever since the Arabs first acquired firearms. In this way they depopulated large areas, especially in the south of Tanganyika, although some peoples did succeed in resisting them. The Ngoni and Masai, for example, often served the Arabs as mercenaries, but seldom kept or provided slaves, while some groups of Nyamwezi formed a trading partnership with the Arabs to the benefit of both parties.

In the interior, even more than on the coast, the distinction between Arabs and native Africans was often blurred. In fact most so-called 'Arabs' were born in Africa, and although they may have been able to trace their descent from a genuine immigrant from Oman, they generally differed from the Swahili mainly in their social position and ability to speak Arabic. It has been suggested that generations of interbreeding with African populations gave them a degree of immunity to malaria and other tropical diseases, which made it possible for them to thrive in regions where white men became ill and died. Few details, however, have survived of the expeditions mounted by men like Kamtima of Tanga, Kaptao of Mombasa, and Ferhaji of Pangani, who all appear to have reached Lake Baringo, on the far side of Masailand, as early as the 1840s. During the same decade, Arab slavers and ivory traders from the coast began to establish settlements along the caravan routes inland, the most important being Tabora in Uyamwezi, on the route from Bagamoyo to Lake Tanganyika.

The existence of these settlements, which were nominally subject to Zanzibar, was used to justify the Sultan's claim to all the territory between the coast and Lake Tanganyika, but in practice his authority did not extend more than a few miles into the interior. Even the inland Arabs themselves often ignored his edicts, although they were usually prepared to appeal to him for military aid in the event of trouble with the local tribes. For example, in 1872, during the war with Mirambo, the Sultan sent 1,000 of his own Baluchis under Amir bin Sultan, as well as another 2,000 'coast people' or Swahili, to reinforce the merchants of Tabora. However, the official governor of Tabora, Said bin Salim, regarded Amir as a rival and refused to co-operate with him, while two of the most powerful traders, Abdullah bin Nasib and Shaykh bin Nasib, operated independently of both leaders with their own private armies. Therefore the war was carried on in an unco-ordinated fashion, by means of occasional skirmishes and the burning of undefended villages, rather than any attempt being made to force a decisive action. In 1876 Abdullah bin Nasib overthrew Said bin Salim, whom many Arabs regarded as too keen to make peace, and forced him to take refuge with Mirambo.

Most of these Arab campaigns are poorly documented, but H.M. Stanley gives a complete order of battle for the army from Tabora

which marched against Mirambo in August 1871:

<i>Leader or Sheikh</i>	
<i>Contingent</i>	
Sayd bin Selim	25 half-
castes	
Khamis bin Abdullah	2 5 0
slaves	
Thani bin Abdullah	80 slaves
Mussoud bin Abdullah	75 slaves
Abdullah bin Mussoud	80 slaves
Ali bin Sayd bin Nasib	2 5 0
slaves	
Nasur bin Mussoud	50 slaves
Hamed Kimiani	70 slaves
Sheikh Hamdam	30 slaves
Sayd bin Habib	50 slaves
Salim bin Sayf	1 0 0
slaves	
Sunguru	25 slaves
Sarboko	25 slaves
Soud bin Sayd bin Majid	50 slaves
Mohammed bin Mussoud	30 slaves
Sayd bin Hamed	90 slaves
Mkasiwa, chief of Unyanyembe	800 Nyamwezi
Various independent chiefs	300 Nyamwezi
Various half-castes and freemen	125 men

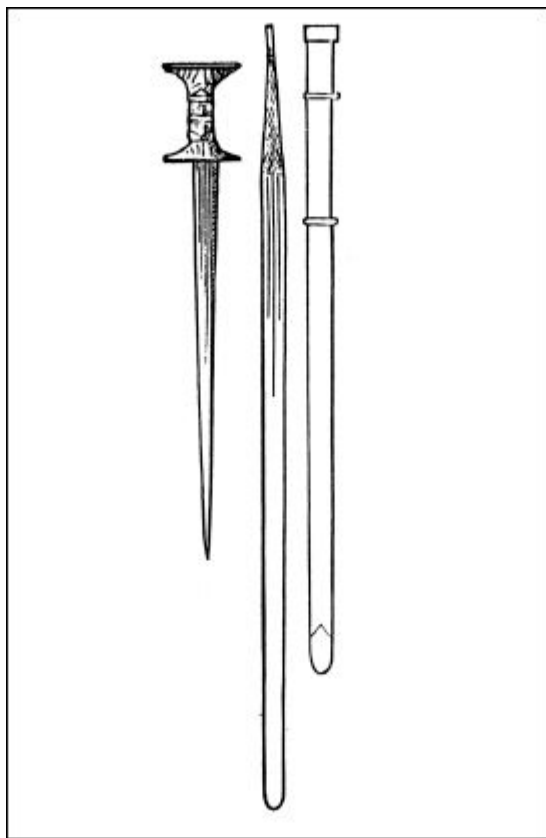
In addition, there were 50 askaris of Stanley's *Herald* expedition temporarily attached to the army. The total strength of the Arab contingents was 2,205 men, of whom 1,500 were armed with guns, most of the remainder being presumably local Nyamwezi spearmen and archers. The firearms consisted, in Stanley's words, of 'flint-lock muskets, German and French double barrels, some English Enfields, and American Springfields'. Each man was provided with between 60–100 rounds of ammunition.

According to Livingstone, the Nyamwezi had a low opinion of the fighting qualities of the Tabora Arabs. In 1872 Mkasiwa's men tried to stop the Arabs joining them against Mirambo, claiming that if a single Arab was killed the rest would run away, demoralising the whole army. Cameron, who was in Tabora a year later, believed that the Arabs and their allies were much stronger than Mirambo, but that their lack of unity and energy prevented them from winning a decisive victory.

Mwinyi Mtwana

The first Zanzibari military posts away from the coast were set up in the 1850s at Chogwe and Tongwa in the Pangani Valley, after the

Shambaa king Kimweri had proved unable to prevent the neighbouring Seguhha tribe cutting the caravan route where it ran through his lands. It was not until the late 1870s that Sultan Barghash made the only serious attempt to establish his authority over the trade routes further into the hinterland. A Swahili merchant named Mwinyi Mtwana was appointed to protect the Zanzibari caravans on their way to Tabora, which were being robbed by Nyamwezi and other bandits. He set off inland and established a base in the village of Mduburu, west of Ugogo, on the edge of the waterless Mgunda Mkali wilderness. The people of Mduburu put up a determined resistance, but the place was captured in August 1880 with the aid of Captain Ramaeckers' Belgian expedition. (Ramaeckers' caravan was part of King Leopold's scheme to introduce Indian elephants for transport purposes, and later came into conflict with Mirambo on Lake Tanganyika — see pp.70 and 153). Ramaeckers was reluctant to become involved in a war, but was forced to intervene because the fighting around Mduburu was blocking his route westwards.



Zanzibari swords, from Richard Burton's Book of the Sword.

Mwinyi Mtwana's headquarters soon became a welcome refuge and provisioning station for Zanzibari and European caravans, and on the Sultan's instructions he charged the whites no tolls. In 1886 he had a garrison of 500 men, all armed with guns. By this time, however, he had become effectively independent of Zanzibar, although he still flew the Sultan's all-red flag, and had begun to take tolls on his own account from everyone who passed through. In 1893 he supported the Hehe against the Germans, so in March a German expeditionary force stormed Mduburu. Mwinyi Mtwana was killed, and the region passed under German control.

FIGURES

19. ZANZIBARI ARAB This figure is based mainly on a drawing of a certain Kiroboto, 'an officer of the Sultan', published in the *Illustrated London News* in March 1889. He wears the standard Arab costume, which consisted of a long white *kanzu* shirt or gown (in this case he appears to be wearing two), a coloured coat, and a turban wound around a cap or fez. Earlier in the 19th century the most popular colour for Arab gowns had been a dull yellow, but by the 1870s white was becoming more common and prestigious. At Tabora in 1871, Stanley wrote of the 'stately Arabs in their long white dresses, and jaunty caps, also of a snowy white'. Over the top of the gown the richer men at least wore either a long coat, as shown here, or a waistcoat. This could be of almost any colour. J.F. Elton, who was Vice-Consul at Zanzibar from 1873 to 1875, wrote of its inhabitants: 'some in dingy brown or dirty white, others in blue, scarlet, gold, and vermilion raiment'.

Burton and Elton both refer to blue and white chequered turbans with fringed red borders, wound around a white skull-cap, and this seems to have been the characteristic headgear of the Arabs of Zanzibar and probably elsewhere on the coast. Elton describes Sultan Barghash as wearing such a chequered turban, and also refers to the 'long-gowned, blue-turbaned idlers' of Mombasa. At his meeting with Stanley in 1871, however, Barghash appeared in a turban 'in alternate colours of red, yellow, brown, and white'. The other typical Arab headgear was the fez, which was usually red or white (this presumably being what Stanley meant by 'jaunty caps ... of snowy white'), but could be elaborately embroidered in various colours. Detail 19a shows an example, collected by Mary French-Sheldon in 1891.

Arabs usually wore what Elton describes as 'awkward sandals ... fastened by a broad band over the instep and a thong passing next to the great toe.' Turkish style slippers — usually crimson or some other

shade of red — are also sometimes mentioned, but it is perhaps unlikely that men would walk long distances in these when on campaign. The Arabs in East Africa fought exclusively on foot. Donkeys might be ridden on the march, without saddle or stirrups, as shown in Figure 11, though Tippu Tib, perhaps the most successful slaver of them all, walked everywhere in order to keep fit. Horses from Oman were imported into Zanzibar, but it was impossible to keep them healthy owing to the climate. (It was believed that iron-grey mares with white legs survived better than animals of other colours, and so these were procured whenever possible.)

This figure's long sword, slung over the left shoulder, is one of three types of Arab sword described by Burton. This is the Frankish type, known as *sayf Faranji* in Arabic, or *upanga* in Swahili. It was about 4 ft 3 in (1.3 m) long, straight-bladed, and was wielded in two hands. The handle was traditionally bound with patterns of black leather and silver wire, the pommel was polished iron, and the scabbard was covered in red Morocco leather. Burton writes of the 'razor-like' sharpness of these blades, especially when compared to European swords. Other types were the *imani*, with a short, straight blade, and the *kittareh*, a curved sabre with an ivory hilt and gold mountings, which was more often found among the coastal Arabs than inland. Burton says that like their compatriots in the Sudan, the Arabs never used their swords for thrusting, and they employed only two cuts: one at the ankles, which was evaded by leaping or stepping backwards, and one at the head, which was parried with a shield. It was with such a blow to the head that a group of Arabs murdered a missionary, Mr Hartley, who attempted to interfere with a slave caravan on the coast near Tanga in 1874.

This man also carries a musket. Wealthy Arabs usually acquired the most up-to-date weapons available, but the matchlocks usually associated with the Baluchis (see Figure 21) were still in use as late as the 1870s. By the 1890s, however, a Snider or Remington breech-loader, or a Winchester repeater, would perhaps be more likely. The original picture shows a straight dagger worn on the belt, but in this reconstruction the more usual curved variety has been substituted. This dagger was known as a *khanjar* or *jambia*, and was worn by every Arab with any pretensions to social status. The handle was carved from a hippopotamus tooth or a rhinoceros or buffalo horn, painted black or white, and decorated with gold or silver filigree work. The pommel was also silver or gold. Sheaths, which Burton says were either 'dark' or scarlet, were similarly ornamented.



Fig 20



Fig 21



Fig 22



20. ZANZIBARI OR SWAHILI ‘ARAB’ In the 1850s, according to Burton, the native Swahili of the coast, whom he also calls ‘Wamrima’, wore only a loincloth and a fez, while men claiming part-Arab descent were distinguished by ‘a turban and a long yellow shirt’. In subsequent decades, however, this distinction became increasingly blurred. This figure is based on a later photograph of a ‘Swahili Arab trader’ in H.H. Johnston’s *The Nile Quest*. His features are obviously African but his dress is that of an Arab, even down to the characteristic *khanjar* dagger.

This man’s gun is protected from the elements by a case

decorated with beadwork. Such cases are not often described, but the one on which this is based was made for Mrs French-Sheldon by her Swahili employees. Flintlock muskets, and later breech-loading rifles, were the favourite weapons of the Swahili, although in the early part of the century guns were less common and native weapons often took their place. In 1811, for example, the garrison of Kilwa consisted of 20 Arabs armed only with spears. As late as the 1850s there were no guns in the hinterland of Mombasa, because the rulers of that port prohibited their importation, and the Arabic history of Dar es-Salaam says that even in the Abushiri War of the late 1880s, many 'Arabs' acquired firearms only by plundering the arsenals of Hindu merchants. The influence of other native tribes on the weaponry of the Swahili was often strong. Burton describes the Gunya who fought for the ruler of Lamu in 1843 as 'brandishing spear-heads like those of the Wamasai, a cubit long' — in other words like the weapon carried by Figure 73. The same writer says that the Swahili often used 'those antiquated German cavalry sabres which find their way all over the East', while the Zanzibari headman of Joseph Thomson's caravan in 1878 combined a white robe and turban with a spear and a 'huge Zulu-like shield'.

By the 1860s chiefs and richer individuals among the Seguhha, Shambaa, Eastern Sagara, and other coastal tribes, as well as the Nyamwezi further inland, had adopted a similar style of dress. Other members of these tribes, who could not afford the complete Arab costume, would resemble Swahili 'Wangwana' like Figures 22–25.

21. BALUCHI SOLDIER Burton gives a colourful description of the typical Baluchi mercenary of the 1850s, 'distinguished from the Arab by the silkiness and the superior length of his flowing beard ... made glossy with henna and indigo. He adheres to his primitive matchlock, a barrel lengthened out to suit the weak powder in use, damascened with gold and silver, and fastened to the frail stock by more metal rings than the old French "Brown Bess" ever had.' The 'Baluchis' were of many different origins, mostly from Asia and the Arabian Peninsula, but also including individuals from various parts of Africa. Verney Cameron met one who was actually a Turk, a deserter from the Egyptian army. Speke and Stanley's headman Sidi Bombay, a Yao tribesman from the far south of Tanganyika who had been captured by slavers as a child, had once served in the Sultan's Baluchi guard. According to Burton 'the wildest and most picturesque' of the Baluchis, whose 'unkempt elf-locks fall in mighty masses', came from the western shores of the Persian Gulf (i.e., from Oman, so they were actually Arabs). These men favoured a long saffron-coloured gown, which was often the only garment they wore. This implies that they

might have gone bareheaded as some Arabian tribes still did, but no illustration from Africa appears to confirm this. Big Indian-style turbans and baggy trousers, as shown here, were popular with men from other areas. Other clothing could be in almost any colour, depending on the taste of the wearer, and generally, according to Cameron, 'all redolent of dirt and grease'. The Baluchis seen by Joseph Thomson in 1878 were 'in all stages of dirt and rags'. Burton says that the officers or 'Jemadars' were much better dressed than their men, and often appeared in scarlet coats and silk turbans.

The array of weapons thrust into this man's waist sash include a curved sabre 'of Persian form'; a dagger, which Burton says was straighter than the Arab type; and possibly a flintlock pistol or a revolver. Cameron describes his Baluchi escort in 1873 as 'covered with bucklers, pistols, swords, spears, and matchlocks'. According to Thomson, 'their arms seemed to have been acquired by the spoliation of an antiquarian museum ... no one was armed like his neighbour'. Each Baluchi carried two gourds for his gunpowder — one containing fine powder for priming, the other coarser powder for charging the matchlock. Ready-made cartridges were also carried in cases made of reed. The match was wound in coils around the stock of the musket when not in use.

The Omanis preferred long, straight swords worn on a strap over the left shoulder, like that of Figure 19, and a dagger on the right hip. Shields were still widely used in the mid-19th century. Burton says that the Omanis' shields were small, round, and made of hippopotamus hide. Elsewhere he says that 'Gulf men' used shields of about a foot (0.3 m) in diameter, with a high central boss, made of the hide of the rhinoceros or addax antelope. One reason for the popularity of addax hide was its natural whiteness, and other shields may have been bleached white as well, as were those of the Somalis. An Indian or Persian type with four small polished metal bosses, referred to by Burton as a 'Cutch "Dhal" or buckler', was commonly used by men originating from further east.

22–25. SWAHILI 'WANGWANA' Our earliest 19th-century account of the people of the Swahili settlements on the east coast comes from James Prior, who accompanied the frigate HMS *Nisus* on a voyage in 1811. He says that their 'common dress' was 'a piece of cotton cloth wrapped round the middle, and extending to the knee', with a second piece of cloth sometimes thrown loosely over the shoulders. The term 'Wangwana' means 'freemen', but in fact these men were not easily distinguishable by their dress from either the slaves or the 'Arab' aristocracy. E.C. Hore, writing about Ujiji in the 1870s, says that he had often encountered a party of free

Fig 23



Fig 24



Fig 25



Fig 26



Fig 27



Swahili porters in ragged loincloths under the supervision of an armed man, dressed in Arab clothes like Figure 20, who turned out to be a slave.

Figure 22, from a sketch by Stanley, dates from 1871. Men such as these, dressed in their native costume, provided the manpower of most of the exploring expeditions from the 1850s to the 1890s. His wraparound loincloth, rolled at the top to keep it in place, would not have looked out of place at the beginning of the century, except that brightly dyed trade cloth had largely replaced the traditional white or dull yellow. The most popular colours were red, white, and blue, but stripes and borders in similar colours, as well as unbleached, light grey 'Amerikani' cloth, were also common.

Figure 23 is based on one of Livingstone's followers, illustrated in his *Last Journals*. His long white gown and soft cap are clearly copied from the Arabs, and the similarity with the costume of Figure 100 is striking. A photograph of Speke's headman Bombay, taken by Grant in 1860, shows him in a similar outfit consisting of a white fez, a white Arab gown with a waist belt, and a sword on a baldric over his right shoulder.

Figures 24 and 25 are from a photograph of 1863 showing Speke's 'Faithfuls' in Cairo at the end of his expedition to the Nile sources. Figure 24's musket and cartridge box would have been supplied by his employer, but many Swahilis would possess similar equipment of their own, which became more common in subsequent years as men employed by expeditions retained the weapons with which they had been issued. Nevertheless, traditional weapons

remained in use even amongst the employees of the explorers. The Swahili porters who accompanied the missionary Rebmann in 1848 were 'armed partly with muskets and partly with bows and arrows', and Figure 25 shows one of several of Speke's men who are illustrated carrying spears.

Although not shown in any of these pictures, bead necklaces were popular among the Swahili. Burton remarked in the late 1850s that only about one person in three seemed to possess sizeable quantities of bead ornaments, but they later became far more common owing to their use as currency by explorers and traders. The best and most colourful clothing was generally reserved for special occasions: Speke, among others, supplied his men with quantities of red cloth for visits to local rulers. Some of the explorers' personal attendants were fitted out in a more idiosyncratic manner, like Grant's Cape coloured servant, who was dressed in a green velvet shooting coat and a red cap. Another example of the adoption of European clothing is seen in detail 25a, from a sketch of 1884 of a man leading a caravan of French White Father missionaries; apart from the hat he wears nothing but a loincloth.

26 & 27. ZANZIBARI IRREGULARS Both of these figures are derived from an illustration in an August 1889 edition of the *Illustrated London News* which shows a motley group of irregulars engaged in a 'war-dance'. Until 1877 the Sultan of Zanzibar's soldiers were not uniformed, and most would have resembled ordinary Swahilis, Arabs, or Baluchis, like Figures 19–25. Figure 27 carries an old-fashioned matchlock and a sabre. The Swahili followers of the Mazruis, who fought the Sultan of Zanzibar for many years, culminating in the great revolt of 1828–29, favoured similar weapons, and must have closely resembled this figure. Details 27a and b show alternative headgear, from the same source as the main figures.

28. ZANZIBARI REGULAR c.1880 The regular Zanzibari army was set up in 1877. Most of its personnel were local Africans rather than Arabs, and adopted a uniform based on that of the Egyptian army. For a short period, according to one eyewitness, the men wore short black jackets and short white trousers with their red fezzes, but this uniform does not appear to have been in service for long. By 1878 the version shown here was already in use. The fez is the usual red colour and lacks a tassel. The jacket and trousers are white. Note that compared with the Egyptian regular in Figure 17 this man's equipment is very basic, although a belt and cartridge box similar to those of Figure 18 would presumably have been worn on campaign. British Slade Wallace pouches in dark brown leather were issued during the 1890s. The standard rifle was the Snider, which was also supplied by Britain.

Fig 28



Fig 29



Fig 30



Fig 31



Official Zanzibari uniforms reflected the Sultan's preoccupation with appearance and drill, and numerous variations appear to have been introduced at various times for parade purposes. Harry Johnston, visiting in 1884, wrote of 'a smart-looking regiment of the New Zanzibar Army, the men in white uniform, with red and yellow caps'. Even Portal, otherwise so critical of the force, admitted that 'on parade they appeared fairly smart, they drilled in a way that would put some English militia regiments to shame'. By the late 1880s a full dress uniform had been issued, incorporating a red or white tunic, white trousers, and either a fez or a lower 'pillbox' cap. The colour of

the latter is not recorded, but white or red is most likely, perhaps (following Johnston) with yellow embroidery or other decoration. A picture of the garrison of Vivi in 1880 shows troops in white breeches, dark (presumably red) jackets, and white pillbox hats with dark tops. Bandsmen wore a parade uniform consisting of a white tropical helmet, complete with a metal spike on top and a plate and chain across the front, and white trousers with red stripes down the sides.

29. ZANZIBARI GUARDSMAN c.1885 This man, taken from a drawing of 1885, is wearing a more traditional style of uniform, which appears to consist of a collarless shirt worn over a long white Arab gown like that of Figure 23. The shirt and fez were probably red. An account of the same period describes 'red and white' uniforms of European type, so it is possible that a red shirt or jacket was also worn with the white trousers. It is not clear who these men were, but Peter Abbott, in *Unknown Armies: British East Africa*, suggests that they were probably the personal bodyguard of the Sultan. Alternatively the collarless shirt may have been an official or unofficial undress uniform, which was no doubt more to the taste of the rank and file than the European-style tunic with its high collar and buttons.

Richard Burton describes an earlier attempt to produce a uniform for the Sultan's guard in the 1850s, when Sayyid Said imported a collection of various odd items of clothing from the pre-Mutiny Bombay Army in India. Exactly what these were is not known, but British red jackets would presumably have suited the local taste. They certainly did not constitute a proper uniform. According to Burton the Sultan once enquired about the cost of new clothing and equipment for his bodyguard, but decided that it was not worth it since the men were slaves, and not very good soldiers in any case: 'the guard itself would not fetch half that sum'.

30. ZANZIBARI SOLDIER IN CAMPAIGN DRESS c.1893 The white uniform was not very practical on campaign, and it seems to have been common practice to issue a khaki version to men taking part in expeditions to the interior. Taken from a photograph in Sir Gerald Portal's book on his 1893 expedition to Uganda, this is Sudi bin Suleiman, an NCO in the Zanzibari army, who is described as the 'native headman' of Portal's caravan. Portal had been given an escort of 200 Zanzibari volunteers, to whom he issued khaki tunics, knee-breeches, puttees, and sandals (though it is noteworthy that Sudi bin Suleiman is wearing long khaki trousers, and what appears to be a white shirt under his tunic; no doubt similar non-regulation items were common on campaign). The red fez was retained, and in this picture it has a badge on the front, of which, unfortunately, the details cannot be seen. Note that he is wearing naval style rank insignia on

his sleeve, consisting of three (probably white) horizontal bands surmounted by a loop, but the official insignia for NCOs were chevrons, also worn on the lower sleeve, as shown in detail 30a.

Zanzibari soldiers normally went barefoot, but sandals were often worn when on campaign in the interior. The wearing of shoes became an urgent issue for many commanders of native troops during the 1890s, with the spread of a parasite known as the jigger, which had been accidentally introduced to East Africa by explorers coming from the west coast. This pest burrowed into the feet to lay its eggs, and caused lameness and even the loss of toes. It could, and sometimes did, cripple an entire expedition, and is repeatedly blamed for the failure of British operations against Bunyoro. It was especially troublesome in the Great Lakes region, but had colonised most of the country by the end of the 19th century.

31. BRITISH OFFICER OF THE ZANZIBARI ARMY c.1900 The Zanzibari army remained under the command of officers seconded from the British forces until it was disbanded in 1906. A photograph of around the turn of the century shows British officers in this tropical white uniform with spiked sun helmet. In the early 1880s the Arab officers wore a uniform which appears to have been based on that of the Royal Navy. It consisted of a dark blue frock coat and trousers, with gold or silver lace. In 1884 Johnston described them in 'white trousers and magnificently embroidered tunics'. Later they were issued with a white or red and white dress uniform like that of the rank and file, with the addition of red trouser stripes and gold frogging on the tunic.

32 & 33. ZANZIBARI PORTERS Both European and Arab caravans recruited *pagazis* or porters at Zanzibar or elsewhere on the coast for their expeditions into the interior. These men need not have been local Swahilis, and the term 'Zanzibari' often referred to men enlisted in the territories under the Sultan's control rather than necessarily of Zanzibari origin. In 1892 the explorer J.W. Gregory identified 14 different nationalities among his 'Zanzibari' porters, including men from as far afield as Nyamwezi and Buganda.

The dress and equipment of these two men is based on the same photograph as Figures 24 and 25. Note the two different ways of tying the loincloth: Figure 33 has simply wrapped his around his waist and rolled it up at the top, leaving an opening at the front, while 32's is knotted at the waist, with a large triangular flap hanging down. Porters were generally armed, although they could seldom be relied upon to fight if attacked by hostile tribesmen. Grant's experience in 1861 was all too typical: when his caravan was charged by 200 spearmen in Uzinza, all but three of his 100 porters dropped their

loads and fled, even though they were armed with muskets.

The Zanzibaris usually bore their loads on their heads. The amount which they could carry varied greatly from one man to another; 50 lbs (23 kg) was usual, but some individuals managed double loads. Figure 32 is carrying a European traveller's box — an unpopular load because of its awkward shape — while Figure 33 shows a more traditional way of packing goods for transport. Burton pointed out the difference between Nyamwezi caravans, which travelled as light as possible, and those of the Arabs, slow-moving and loaded down with unnecessary luxuries. Furthermore most Zanzibari *pagazis* were not professionals but were recruited from diverse backgrounds, and needed to be hardened gradually to the routine of marching. This explains why caravans generally travelled much more slowly at the beginning of an expedition than they did later on, when the men were fitter and the trade goods and supplies which they carried were largely used up.

34. ARAB FLAGS Figure 34b is the plain 'blood red' flag of the Sultan of Zanzibar. It was flown not only by regular Zanzibari forces, but by any Arab caravan or settlement — or any local chief wishing to claim his protection — within the region claimed by the Sultan, from the coast westward as far as Lake Tanganyika. It was also carried by European explorers in the Sultan's territories, and frequently (in an attempt to claim some spurious legitimacy) by freelance slavers and bandits with no connection to Zanzibar at all. In the colonial period the red flag was often raised as a symbol of resistance to German rule.

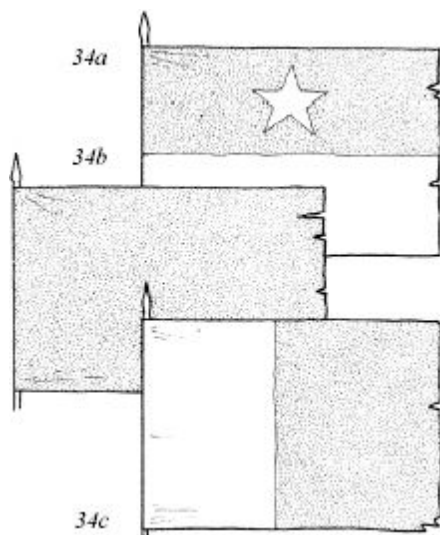
Fig 32



Fig 33



Fig 34



Individual Arab leaders might identify themselves with a modified version of the Sultan's flag, produced by adding strips of white, or possibly blue, cloth. One such flag was once mistaken by a British ship at a distance for the French tricolour. Figure 34c, carried by one of Stanley's party in an illustration of his 1875 expedition, is an example, although this one may actually be a Baganda flag of a design copied from the Arabs (see the remarks under Figure 65). It is divided vertically into two sections, one white and one red. Unusually, the askaris who accompanied the German explorer J.M. Hildebrandt from Mombasa in 1875 carried a plain white flag bearing Arabic inscriptions from the Koran.

34a is the flag of the Sultan of Witu, a Swahili town on the coast north of Mombasa nominally subject to Zanzibar. It is divided horizontally, red over white, with a five-pointed white star on the red ground.

BETWEEN THE COAST AND THE LAKES

Inland from Zanzibar, the route to Lake Tanganyika surmounted a series of mountain ranges before crossing the Tanganyika plateau to the Arab settlements at Tabora and Ujiji. This region was fairly well populated, and it was being regularly traversed by the Arabs long before Burton and Speke became the first white men to see Lake Tanganyika in 1858. From the point of view of the explorers it was often little more than a country to be crossed on the way to Buganda or the Congo, until the Germans claimed it for their new empire in the 1880s. The terrain, where not farmed, was mostly open woodland or savannah, often broken by ranges of hills. Water was very scarce in places, but the great deserts, swamps, and jungles which made campaigning so difficult in many parts of Africa were absent.

The local peoples varied in their attitude to outsiders and their ability to resist incursions. Many of them, such as the Gogo and the Ha, were preoccupied mainly with extracting tolls, or *hongo*, which consisted of quantities of cloth, beads, or wire (used for ornaments), which were customarily paid by travellers to the chiefs. The most prominent tribe in the central region, the Nyamwezi, tended to be more interested in trading than fighting, but the rivalry between the Arabs and the local warlords often erupted into war, while in the south Ngoni invaders from beyond the Zambezi had introduced a new cause of instability during the second quarter of the century. Here tribes like the Sango and Hehe, inspired by the Ngoni, formed miniature 'empires' which struggled constantly among themselves for domination of the region.

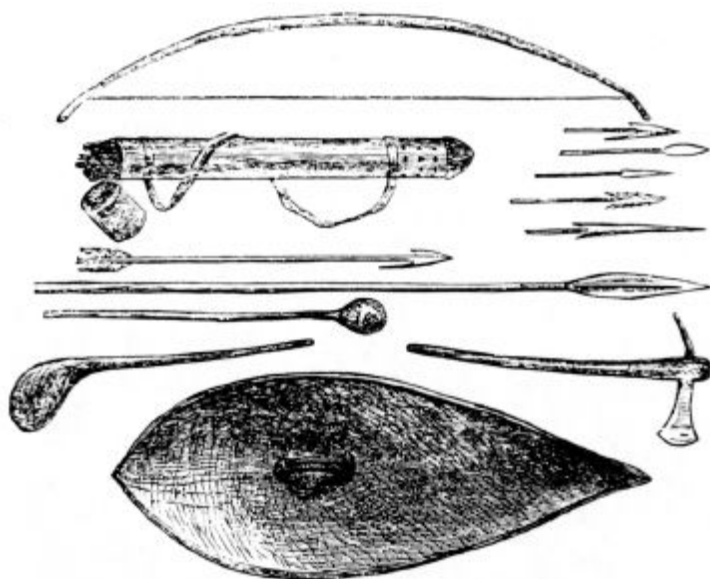
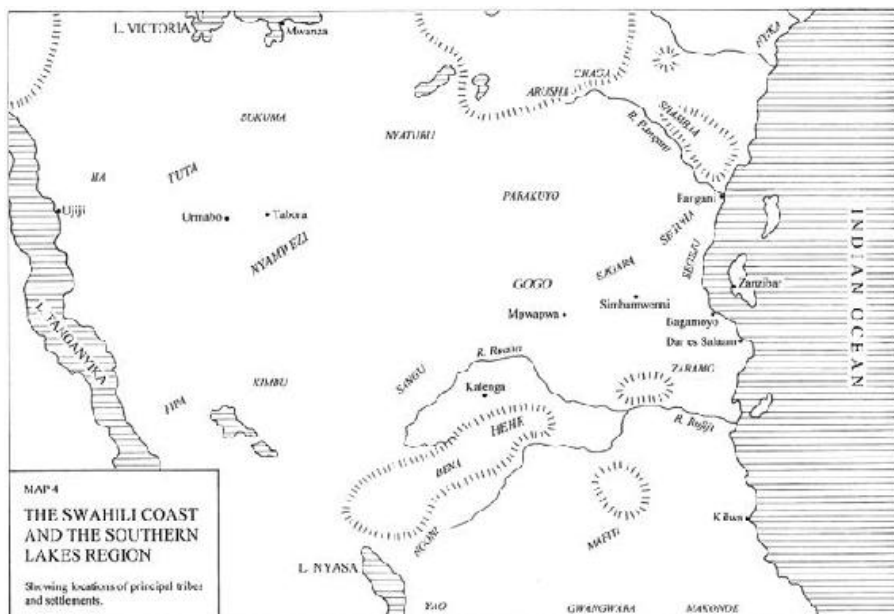
THE ZARAMO

The Zaramo were the principal tribe of the flat coastal plain on the mainland immediately opposite Zanzibar. They were loosely organised into villages under headmen who were originally called *Pazi* or *Phanze*, but who by the 1860s had begun to adopt grandiose Arab titles such as 'Diwan', or even 'Sultan'. In the early years of the 19th century the Zaramo had not only resisted penetration of their country by outsiders, but had on occasion established their own hegemony over stretches of the coast claimed by the Sultan of Zanzibar. The Arabic history of Dar es-Salaam relates how, sometime around the beginning of the century, the coastal Swahilis called on one of the Zaramo *Pazi* for aid against a Kamba incursion from the north. The Zaramo drove off the Kamba, but remained on the coast for a time and

forced the townspeople to pay them tribute. At that period the Zaramo were allied with the Doe, who were then one of the most powerful tribes in the region, but soon afterwards the latter experienced a decisive defeat at the hands of the Kamba and never recovered their former strength. The missionary J. Krapf was told around 1848 that 'at one time' the Doe had had a powerful king whose officers 'were placed in regular grades, and great order prevailed among them'. Uniquely in this part of Africa, the Doe were cannibals: they are supposed to have adopted the practice deliberately in order to frighten their Kamba enemies, and one source claims that the victory of the Zaramo and their allies over the Kamba was mainly due to the terror this inspired. Rumours of occasional cannibalism among the Doe persisted into the 1890s.



*Inhabitants of Uzaramo, sketched by Captain Grant in 1860. Note the variations in dress, from what appear to be an Arab gown and fez at far right to the loincloth and native hairstyle of the figure in the centre. (J.H. Speke, *Journal of the Discovery of the Source of the Nile*, 1863)*



*Weapons of the Doe and neighbouring tribes of eastern Tanganyika, from a sketch by Stanley. The Doe were said to be skilled with the battleaxe and club, but by Stanley's time they had been decimated by their musket-armed neighbours, the Seguhha. (H.M. Stanley, *How I Found Livingstone*, 1872)*

It was not until the 1850s that the Zanzibaris managed to assert more than a nominal authority in Uzaramo. In 1857 Burton met an Indian named Ramji, who 'about 13 years ago' had defended the town

of Kaole against a determined attack by 3,000 Zaramo warriors by loading his cannon with pointed sticks after running out of more conventional ammunition. Zaramo headmen often threatened violence in order to extract tolls from caravans, and the tribe first came to the attention of Europeans in 1845 with the murder of a young French naval officer, Eugene Maizan. The Sultan of Zanzibar had offered the inexperienced explorer a bodyguard of 40 musketeers, but he had left them behind in his haste to depart for the interior. At the village of Dege la Mhora he was captured by the Zaramo chief Mazungera, who tortured him in the hope of finding out where his nonexistent treasure was hidden, and then killed him. The Sultan placated the French authorities by sending an army — which Burton says comprised 300–400 musketeers — to punish the chief, only to find that he had fled. Mazungera's son Hembe led the Zaramo into battle against the Zanzibaris, but according to Burton 'after skirmishing for a couple of days' the tribesmen dispersed. The only one of the few prisoners taken who could be associated with the murder was the man who had beaten the drum while Maizan was being interrogated; he was put in chains at Zanzibar. J.H. Speke later interviewed Hembe, who had taken refuge 'in the centre of an almost impenetrable thicket', and who confessed to having carried out the murder himself on the instructions of his father.

On the strength of the fact that Mazungera held a title conferred on him by the Sultan, Speke blamed the Arabs for instigating the affair. Whatever the truth of this the Zaramo had learned a lesson, but so had the exploring community. No whites ever went into Uzaramo again without an armed escort, and no doubt for this reason the tribe gave later travellers little trouble. It was probably the Maizan affair that Burton had in mind when he described the Zaramo, in an obvious exaggeration, as 'the most dangerous tribe on the route to the Lake'. By the 1870s they had certainly lost most of their warlike propensities, and were described by the missionary Hutchinson as timid, keeping up a warlike appearance mainly for the sake of tradition and in the hope of deterring aggressors without having to fight. He says that on the approach of a caravan the warriors 'generally knelt in the tall grass, or behind a bush, until the women reported that there was no danger.' Nevertheless, there were occasional rumours of uprisings, and as late as 1875 the Sultan of Zanzibar sent troops to Bagamoyo because of a threatened Zaramo attack.

THE SEGUHHA

South of the Pangani River lived the Seguhha (called 'Zegura' by

Burton, following the Arabic mispronunciation of the name), who were the main slave-catchers of the area. Because of this they had close connections with the coastal Arabs and Swahilis, many of whose customs they adopted. As early as the 1860s they were well supplied by their Arab partners with muskets and gunpowder, which they used to capture slaves and territory at the expense of their neighbours.

According to H.M. Stanley, many of the so-called Seguhha were in fact not local tribesmen but 'organised banditti, consisting of renegade Wamrima [i.e., Swahili], offenders against the law of Zanzibar, convicts, and kidnappers'. Five years before Stanley's first visit (therefore in about 1866) they had carried out an enormous raid into Usagara, bringing back more than 500 slaves and depopulating most of the Makata plain. The most famous and dreaded of the Seguhha chiefs was Kisabengo, who died not long before Stanley arrived in 1871. He had risen from humble beginnings to found the principal settlement of Useguhha, which was known as Simbamwenni, or 'Lion City'. This was a town of about 5,000 inhabitants, laid out on the Arab plan and protected by a rectangular stone wall loopholed for muskets. An admiring Stanley wrote that 'through a ride of 950 miles in Persia I never met a town outside of the great cities better fortified than Simbamwenni'. From this stronghold Kisabengo effectively controlled the caravan traffic through the country, levying tolls at will. After his death he was succeeded by his daughter, under whom Simbamwenni's power began to wane. By 1873 it had already declined so far that Cameron marched past the walls without even bothering to stop, let alone pay *hongo*. In the late 1880s the Seguhha allied themselves with Abushiri's Arab forces against the Germans, and after their defeat were incorporated into German East Africa, along with the other peoples of the region.

THE SAGARA

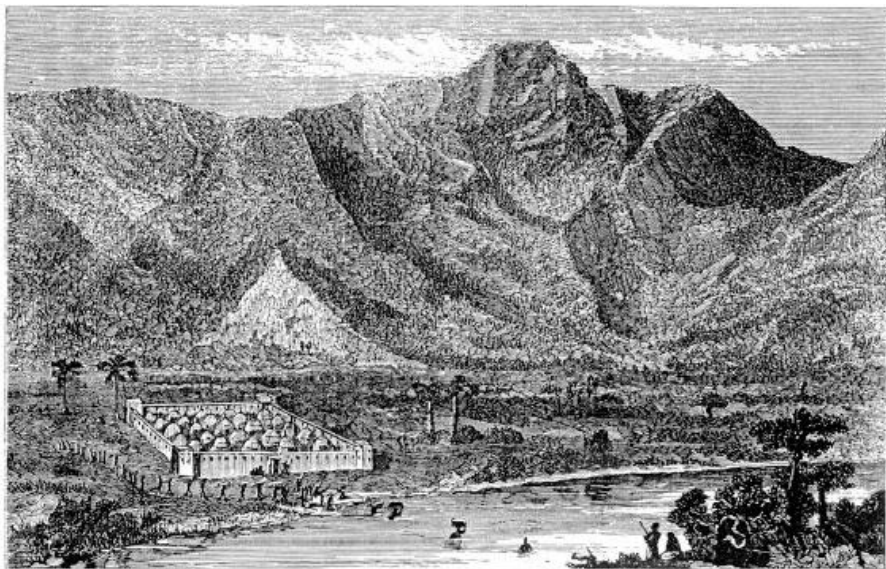
The nearby Sagara were a people of the hills, inhabiting what Burton calls the 'East African ghauts' (using the Indian term for a range of mountains which rise step-like parallel to the coast). Despite their proximity to the caravan routes, the Sagara were not a wealthy tribe; they lived by hunting and subsistence farming, and were regarded as timid and suspicious people who preferred to fight from ambush. 'Poor, meagre-looking wretches' in Speke's words, 'they invite attack in a country where every human being has a market value, and are little seen by the passing caravan'. Elsewhere the same writer gives his opinion that, in contrast to their neighbours, they carried weapons more for show than with any intention of using them. Stanley's impression, on the other hand, was rather more favourable than

Speke's: he calls them 'a frank, amiable, and brave people'.

Their timidity was mainly due to a long history of victimisation by more powerful neighbours. In the mid-1860s much of the country was depopulated by a series of raids by the Arabs and their Sango allies from the south, followed later by an equally devastating Masai invasion. The Seguhha also regarded the Sagara as a major source of slaves. By the 1880s many warriors had acquired firearms, but their military reputation was still not high. The lay missionary J.T. Last reported in 1883 that 'when attacked, the men will turn out with a great noise, and fire off their long Tower flint-lock guns without aim, but as soon as one of their number is down they take to their heels like hares'.

THE SHAMBAA

The Shambaa — also known as the Sambara or Shambala — inhabited the region known as Usambara, a mountainous block rising out of the plains above the Pangani Valley, well off the main caravan route to Lake Tanganyika. The mountains were relatively healthy and well-watered, and supported a very numerous farming population. The Shambaa were first united in the 18th century under King Mbegha, who averted an imminent war between the native people of the mountains and an influx of refugees who had arrived seeking sanctuary from the Masai. Under Mbegha and his son Bughe the mixed population was organised into a powerful centralised kingdom, which conquered and absorbed the Bondei in the lowlands to the east and established a large capital city at Vugha on the edge of the plains. Krapf, who was there in 1848, commented on the 'good order' of Usambara, and the impressive authority wielded by the king.



*Simbamwenni or 'Lion City', the stone-walled capital of the Seguhha, which was built in the mid-19th century by the notorious slave-raider Kisabengo. Stanley was impressed by the quality of the fortifications, which he describes as 'on an Arabic-Persian model', but better constructed than most of those which he had seen in Persia. The walls were provided with a double row of loopholes for muskets, and stone towers overlooked each corner. This picture gives a false impression of the smallness of the city, which Stanley estimated to have actually contained about 1,000 houses as well as the Sultan's palace, built in Zanzibari style. (H.M. Stanley, *How I Found Livingstone*, 1872)*

Bughe's grandson, Kimweri ye Nyumbai, was the greatest of the Shambaa kings, who in his youth extended his power as far as Tanga and Pangani on the coast. He came to the throne about 1815, was visited by Richard Burton in 1857, and died five years later, although by that time he was very old and his power was waning. During his reign the main preoccupation of the Shambaa was a long-standing war with a Seguhha warlord named Kivuma, who had a stronghold on Mount Mafi. Then after his death the kingdom was torn apart by civil war. Kimweri's sons had abused the power which he delegated to them and alienated the subject peoples by their oppression, so he nominated his grandson Skekulwavu as his successor instead. However, several dissident chiefs immediately rose in revolt. Two of these, Mshuza and Semboja, hired mercenaries from the nearby Taita hills and led them in an attack on the city of Vugha.

The 'Age of Violence' in Usambara

Mshuza and Semboja's forces advanced in two groups, using a plan which was said to have been invented by Semboja but was, in fact, a traditional tactic in African warfare. One party drew off the defenders with a feint attack while the other broke into the unprotected city and

burnt it. Shekulwavu escaped to Kwe Tango and built a stockade there, but was pursued and besieged. After a week of fighting he was fatally wounded when his own gun burst in his hands, and the royalist army fell apart. The next 20 years became known in Usambara as the *kibonda*, or 'age of violence'. Against the background of incessant war between Semboja and the sons of Shekulwavu, the conquered Bondei revolted, the Seguhha and others launched repeated raids for slaves, mercenary armies of Seguhha and Masai ravaged the countryside, and the whole of Usambara was plunged into anarchy. The main centre of resistance to Semboja was at Mghambo, which was described by Harry Johnston in 1879. This town was built on an inaccessible peak surrounded by dense bush, and was further protected by a system of trenches and abatis of felled trees. Gaps in the defences were blocked with wooden posts driven into the ground to form a mass 6 ft (1.8 m) thick, pierced by doors carved from solid pieces of timber. These precautions showed the extent to which the once well governed and expansionist Shambaa now lived in fear.

In 1883 the Shambaa civil wars briefly became part of a wider struggle, when Mbarak of Gazi, in revolt against the Sultan of Zanzibar, marched through the area with his army. His attempt to ally himself with one of the warring factions came to nothing, however, because storms made the mountain paths impassable to his troops. Soon afterwards a Zanzibari army under the Wali of Pangani arrived and intervened on the side of Semboja, but the fighting continued after the end of Mbarak's revolt and the Zanzibari withdrawal in 1884. Between November 1887 and March 1888 an army from Vugha besieged Mghambo but was eventually forced to retire. This was the last action of the war, which ended soon afterwards with the establishment of German control in Usambara.

Semboja made peace with the Germans, who recognised him as king. In September 1888, during the Abushiri War, he attacked and plundered the caravan of two German explorers, Baumann and Meyer, but that was his only contribution to the Arab cause. In February 1890, after the defeat of the Arabs, Semboja and a chief named Kibanga both surrendered to the German authorities at Tanga. Kibanga was made chief of Bondei and East Usambara, while Semboja, after paying a fine for his attack on the explorers, was confirmed as king in West Usambara. The dynasty came to an end in 1895, when Semboja killed the lover of one of his wives and the local German commander took the opportunity to hang him for murder.



*Most villages in East Africa were protected by wooden palisades pierced by low, narrow gates, which could only be entered sideways and in a crouching position. These were deliberately designed to place an attacker at a disadvantage, despite the obvious inconvenience to the inhabitants. This example was sketched by Stanley in Ukwere, east of Uzaramo, in 1871. (H.M. Stanley, *How I Found Livingstone*, 1872)*

The king of the Shambaa was known as *Simba Mwene*, or ‘Lion of the Lord’ (a title which obviously inspired the name of the Seguhha capital, which Stanley rendered as ‘Simbamwenni’). His power was based partly on traditional respect for the house of Mbegha, and partly on control of a small standing army. When Burton visited him in 1857 Kimweri had a bodyguard of 400 musketeers whom he called ‘Wa-engrezi’, or ‘Englishmen’. They were, of course, local recruits, the name having presumably been inspired by gun-armed English sailors or explorers seen on the coast. According to Krapf the Shambaa had already acquired a handful of muskets by 1849, when the king’s bodyguard was first mentioned, but the tribe as a whole only gradually substituted firearms for the bows which they still relied on in Burton’s day. (Charles New reported, however, that when he arrived at Vugha in 1874 the king rather optimistically asked him for ‘a score of cannon’.) The Shambaa were not noted for their superior weaponry or courage, but owed their victories to the fact that they were much more numerous than most of their enemies. A system of signal drums could assemble large armies very quickly from the closely grouped villages. They were always reluctant to campaign far into the lowlands as they were highly vulnerable to malaria, which

was unknown in the mountains.

THE GOGO

Inland from the coastal zone, trade was squeezed through a relatively narrow route which lay between the warlike tribes on either side — the Masai to the north, and the Sango (and later the Hehe) to the south. All caravans travelling between the coast and Lake Tanganyika therefore had to pass through the dry, stony thorn jungles of Ugogo. The local inhabitants, the Gogo, took full advantage of this fact to tax them heavily. Some explorers complained bitterly about their constant demands for *hongo* — although others, such as Verney Cameron, accepted that the system was basically fair, as if the local people had not maintained the waterholes the country would have been virtually impassable for caravans. Nevertheless, fair or not, the tolls were collected by the threat of armed force. The Gogo seldom actually had to fight, mainly because they had long ago established their reputation as warriors. They were traditional enemies of the Nyamwezi, whom they usually defeated, and about a generation before Burton's visit (therefore probably some time in the late 1820s or early 1830s) they had destroyed an entire Nyamwezi caravan which tried to force its way through their lands: 'an event', says Burton, 'embalmed in a hundred songs and traditions'.

Another reason why few travellers tried to resist the Gogo was their sheer numbers. Not only was the land well populated, but the people seldom travelled — having no need to, as trade invariably came to them. So the villages were always full of warriors, who were available to make a demonstration of force if required. In addition they were well organised, and were able to call out large numbers in a very short time. When the chief of a village had the ox horn blown as a signal for war, all the other villages in the neighbourhood would immediately respond, their fighting men emerging from their huts in full war dress within minutes. Stanley witnessed such a mobilisation in 1872, in response to an incursion of suspected cattle rustlers. He describes a mustering of up to a thousand warriors, those from each village forming a column with skirmishers on the flanks, moving 'at a uniform swinging double-quick, the ankle and knee bells all chiming in admirable unison'.

In fact, says Burton, the Gogo would easily have been able to overwhelm even the largest caravans of his day, but they did not do so because they did not wish to discourage their main source of income. 'Sixty guns,' he remarks, 'do not suffice to prevent attack in Ugogo.' Elsewhere, however, Burton was characteristically scathing about the tribe's true military potential, considering that they were 'neither

brave nor well-armed.’ In 1861 Speke spoke with the Arab survivors of a recent disastrous war with the Gogo. It had begun when an Arab trader named Mohinna entered the village of Khoko, and his men foolishly began to draw water from the well before constructing a thorn fence to protect their camp. When the Gogo threatened them for taking water without permission, Mohinna’s men panicked and fled, leaving behind all their ivory and other merchandise. Mohinna also escaped, but shot dead the Gogo chief before doing so. The Gogo retaliated by destroying one caravan at a village called Mzanza, and detaining several others, so the Arabs at Tabora put together an army to recover their goods. A hundred armed slaves were sent to join forces with Snay bin Osman, who was already in the field on a campaign against the Nyamwezi, and free their colleagues in Ugogo. At first the attack went well; Khoko was captured and Mohinna’s ivory recovered, along with many slaves and cattle. But then the Arabs split their forces, sending one group back to Tabora with the loot and keeping another in reserve at Mdaburu, while a third, under Snay bin Osman, formed a punitive expedition against Mzanza. Again the first onslaught was successful, but the Arabs were then counter-attacked by a combined army of Gogo and allied Humba (an agricultural tribe of Masai descent which had settled in the region). Most of the Arabs’ askaris either fled or were speared to death, Snay being among the dead. To compound the disaster, the column returning to Tabora with the ivory, cattle, and slaves from Khoko was ambushed and captured by the Nyamwezi.

A decade later, in 1874, Stanley found Ugogo relatively peaceful, but estimated that 500 men armed with breech-loaders would have been required to force a passage. Fifteen years after that, passing through with his Emin Pasha Relief Expedition, he found the Gogo’s exactions as annoying as ever: ‘No natives know so well how to aggrieve and be unpleasant to travellers. One would think there was a school somewhere in Ugogo to teach low cunning and vicious malice to the chiefs, who are masters in foxy-craft.’ An additional fear was the possibility that if they were defied the Gogo would resort to a ‘scorched earth’ policy, hiding their cattle and grain and blocking up the wells on the few routes known to outsiders, as Cameron says they had previously done against the Arabs.

It was not until the arrival of the Germans that the system of *hongo* was forcibly abolished. In October 1889 a powerful column of 25 Germans and 550 askaris under Hermann von Wissmann passed through Ugogo on its way to Mpwapa. The chiefs sensibly did not resist, but instead agreed to place the country under German protection. Despite this the adventurer Carl Peters deliberately picked a fight on his way home from Uganda the following year, having a

peaceful emissary (who was in fact the son of the local chief) seized and flogged for no more serious offence than hanging around his camp looking suspicious. Two or three thousand Gogo attacked the 20 soldiers of the expedition, but they were quickly demoralised by the effectiveness of Peters' repeating rifles. He claims that he was able to drive off parties of several hundred single-handed, thanks to their fear of his guns. Peters invited a passing Nyamwezi caravan to join in against their hereditary enemies, and the Gogo lost hundreds of cattle, as well as 12 villages burnt to the ground. Peters believed that this battle showed how exaggerated the reputation of the tribe had always been. Soon afterwards another German column under Emin Pasha burnt another 19 villages, after which the Gogo put up no further resistance.



Knives collected by Mary French-Sheldon in the Kilimanjaro region. The leaf-shaped blades and guardless hilts are typical of those used by the Masai, the Chaga, and many neighbouring tribes.
(Mrs M. French-Sheldon, *Sultan to Sultan*, 1892)

THE NYATURU

The Nyaturu or Turu inhabited a semi-arid region west of Lake Eyasi, on the little-travelled direct route from Ugogo to Lake Victoria. They were probably a Nilotic people, originating from one of the waves of migration from the north which had preceded the Masai, so may have been related to the Sirikwa, whom the Masai claimed to have expelled from the Kenya Highlands in the 17th century. However, the Nyaturu

were heavily influenced by the local Bantu peoples, and their original affinities have been obscured. Stanley calls them ‘descendants of Somalis’, although he produces no evidence for this assertion. Their own traditions are even more intriguing, claiming that their ancestors came across the sea from an island to the east. (This is quite possible, as Indonesian traders based in Madagascar were active in East Africa during the Middle Ages.) Whatever the truth of these stories, the Nyaturu were always aloof and rather mysterious, and little is recorded about them in 19th-century sources. This is especially unfortunate because — to judge from their recorded battles against foreign enemies — they were an exceptionally formidable fighting people.

The Nyaturu are described by the missionary C.T. Wilson as ‘a small warlike tribe’, semi-nomadic, hostile to outsiders, and very resistant to change. They lived partly by agriculture and partly by cattle-herding, as the Sirikwa did before them. Their numbers are not known, but from Stanley’s account it seems that their country was prosperous and densely populated, with numerous villages situated within sight of each other. In Uyanzi, a district in the west of the country bordering on Unyamwezi, a Nyaturu aristocracy dominated the local Nyamwezi farmers in the same way as the Bahima pastoralists did further west.

Burton, writing about events in the late 1850s, says that the Nyaturu had beaten the Arabs in battle on several occasions. Earlier in the century the Sagara and Gogo had also suffered from their raids. However, their ‘finest hour’ was in 1875, when within the space of a few months they defeated two separate incursions by far better equipped enemies. The first invader was the Nyamwezi warlord Mirambo, who was then at the height of his power and was steadily extending his territories northwards towards Lake Victoria. We have no detailed account of the campaign, but Mirambo was decisively defeated, and never again tried to advance in that direction. The victory of the tribesmen was achieved despite the fact that Mirambo’s men had guns, while the Nyaturu — as they boasted to Stanley afterwards — had to rely on their bows.

The Battle of Vinyata, 23–25 January 1875

Their next victim was H.M. Stanley himself, who arrived in Uturu only a few months after Mirambo had been driven out. Most expeditions gave the area a wide berth, but Stanley was in a hurry, and chose the most direct route from the coast to Lake Victoria. On 21 January 1875 his 250-strong caravan made camp outside the village of Vinyata. He had driven his men hard on the road from Bagamoyo, and a halt was

necessary in order to rest the porters and repack their loads. Stanley was the first white man to visit this region, and he found that most of the other inhabitants fled when he approached, apparently mistaking his expedition for one of Mirambo's armies. No doubt because of their recent victory, the Nyaturu were much more confident. At first they seemed friendly; a local witchdoctor arrived and presented Stanley with an ox, was feasted in return on 'Huntley and Palmer's best and sweetest biscuits', and then asked if the ox's heart could be returned to him after it had been slaughtered. It later transpired that the giving of an ox and the taking back of the heart were part of a magical ritual designed to weaken an enemy. Stanley also suspected that the Nyaturu had been tempted to attack by a careless display of the expedition's trade cloths, which had been stretched out around the camp to dry.

For a day or so the two sides traded amicably, but on the morning of the 23rd 'a large body of natives' appeared outside Stanley's camp fully armed, accusing the expedition's askaris of having stolen some milk. The explorer offered to pay for the milk, but a few minutes later one of his men burst into the camp with the news that he and a companion had been attacked while cutting wood. Stanley hurriedly distributed ammunition and put his men on alert. His force consisted of three white men, 70 askaris armed with Snider rifles, and 160 porters, some of whom carried muzzle-loading muskets. One of his accounts says that the men initially took cover behind the sections of the dismantled steel boat, the *Lady Alice*, which was being carried up to Lake Victoria, although elsewhere he fails to mention this. The Nyaturu opened the battle with a rush towards the camp, shooting arrows and throwing spears, but when they came within 30 yds (27 m) Stanley ordered his askaris to counter-attack. They drove the warriors back a few hundred yards, deployed into skirmish formation, and opened a 'brisk' fire. After an hour or so, the Nyaturu retired. This must have been their first experience of breech-loading guns, but it seems that the morale effect was lessened by the askaris' poor shooting. Stanley's accounts give varying figures of between six and 15 enemy dead.

The expedition took advantage of the respite to fortify their camp. A rectangular wooden stockade was built, with raised firing platforms at each corner, and the vegetation was cut down around it to provide a clear field of fire about 200 yds (183 m) wide. According to Stanley's diary, 'later in the day the natives gathered on the tops of their tembes, but a lucky shot at 1,200 yards distance left us unmolested for the day.' He does not explain who fired this shot, nor with what weapon, but the Winchester repeater which he normally favoured for defence could hardly have been effective at such a range. He also possessed a heavy elephant gun, which was presumably

brought into service in this engagement.

Early the next day, the 24th, the Nyaturu again surrounded the camp, shouting challenges and twanging their bows while calling out, 'Go and ask Mirambo how he fared in Uturu!' By now they had received reinforcements from neighbouring villages, but they were unwilling to attack the strengthened defences and seemed prepared to embark on a long siege in order to starve the defenders out. Stanley therefore decided to go over to the offensive. He organised his 70 askaris into seven ad hoc detachments of ten men each: one to guard the camp, two to act as reserves, and four 'to drive the natives from the plain, procure food and cattle and burn all the villages', while staying 'close enough to each other to give aid' if needed. The four assault parties were placed under the command of the best Zanzibari officers — Farjalla, Ferahan, Chakanja, and Safeni.

According to Stanley's account the ensuing disaster was the fault of the captain of the first party, Farjalla, who went too far to the left, became bogged down in a swamp north of the Mwaru River, and was overrun and killed with all his men. The emboldened Nyaturu then 'bounded confidently towards the second detachment' led by Ferahan, but these men closed ranks and defended themselves with their Sniders until relieved by the reserves. Nevertheless, they were hard pressed. In Stanley's words: 'Ferahan the leader received a spear in his side, but plucking it out, he shot the foe dead and managed to reach the side of young Mirabo, who was defending his "boma" [probably an abandoned hut or small cattle kraal] single handed. This detachment behaved exceedingly well and killed great numbers, but had not the rescue arrived in time, I doubt whether any of them would have been left alive.' Apart from Ferahan's wound, two others from this group were killed. Chakanja's detachment advanced out of sight of the camp, and apparently was quickly overwhelmed, although five of his men escaped to join Safeni. The latter was the only captain who succeeded in carrying out his orders: he captured and burned the witchdoctor's village, and was then joined by another ten men from the reserves before going on to set fire to several more villages and bring back some captured cattle.

In his various narratives Stanley tries to present this fight as a victory for his expedition, writing of 'the folly of the robber Wanyaturu who had needlessly provoked the vengeance we had inflicted on them'. But for this one day alone he admits to the loss of 21 men, plus 20 firearms, for a total of 35 enemy dead. Not only was this an exceptionally poor 'kill ratio' for troops using breech-loaders against spearmen and archers, but it amounted to nearly a third of his total force. The small number of surviving wounded (three), as well as the loss of the guns, suggests that the fighting was at very close

quarters. Stanley characteristically blamed his subordinates for the casualties, but the decision to divide his force was obviously a risky one in the face of a determined enemy. It is hard to avoid the conclusion that the Nyaturu fought not only with exceptional courage but also with considerable tactical skill, quickly recognising that the askaris' deployment made them vulnerable, and concentrating against each detachment in turn. As no source makes any mention of a system of signalling or chain of command, it is unfortunately impossible to say how they achieved this feat.

The next day the Nyaturu again congregated outside the camp, but Stanley had learned his lesson. He sent out a single 40-strong detachment under Manwa Sera, reinforced by some of the musket-armed porters. This time the tribesmen declined to close with them, so Manwa Sera burned some more huts and returned without loss, bringing with him enough looted grain to feed the expedition for six days. Nevertheless, the long-term position was still perilous, and Stanley realised that he would have to break out from Uturu as soon as possible. At 3:00 a.m. on the 26th he struck camp, marched 15 miles (24 km) under cover of darkness, and then built another fortified camp in case of pursuit. But the enemy did not follow up, and he escaped without further trouble.

In the late 1880s the Nyaturu suffered a disastrous famine which apparently permanently broke their fighting power, and Stanley next encountered them as bands of starving refugees on his return from the rescue of Emin Pasha in 1889. They were incorporated into German East Africa during the 1890s, although no serious attempt was made to administer them until early in the 20th century. By this time they had begun to give up their nomadic ways in favour of farming, and were no longer considered dangerous.

In the colonial period the tribe was famous for its adherence to a secret 'lion man' cult, led by witchdoctors who claimed to be able to turn into lions in order to attack their enemies. The actual killing was done by people called *mbojo*, who were either hired assassins or children kidnapped and specially trained for the purpose. They were clothed in the skins of lions and equipped with gloves with iron claws attached, with which they mauled their victims to death. There are no records of these practises from the 19th century, but they presumably represent a fairly long-standing tradition, so it is not impossible that Nyaturu armies might have been accompanied by such sinister assassins.



A thatched hut in Taita, sketched by Mary French-Sheldon in the early 1890s. The people of Taita, a long-established caravan halt between the coast and Kilimanjaro, were by then confined to their forested hills by fear of the Masai and Kamba. In 1891 Bishop Tucker described them as 'cowed and hopeless'. They were conquered in 1897 by a British column under Captain Nelson after a brave attempt at resistance which lasted no more than 20 minutes. (Mrs M. French-Sheldon, Sultan to Sultan, 1892)

THE CHAGA

The Chaga were an agricultural people who lived on the slopes of Mount Kilimanjaro. Although they were frequently visited by Europeans in the late 19th century, the complexity of their political organisation still remained a mystery even at the beginning of the colonial era. The names of no fewer than 732 clans are known, and early in the 20th-century anthropologists identified 133 'parishes', which had all once been independent chiefdoms. Among these were a number of pre-eminent mini-states, each fielding no more than a few hundred fighting men, which fought constantly among themselves for dominance of the mountain. Harry Johnston lists 16 of these, from west to east: Sira, Kibonoto, Machame, Oria, Kibosho, Mpokomo, Moshi, Kirua, Kilema, Marangu, Mamba, Mwiki, Msai, Rombo, Useri, and Kimangelia. Hans Meyer, writing in 1891, gives the total population of all the Chaga states as about 46,000, including 6,000 in Kibosho, the same number in Useri, and 5,000 in the politically fragmented district of Rombo. It is unlikely, therefore, that even the largest states could field more than about 1,000 warriors.

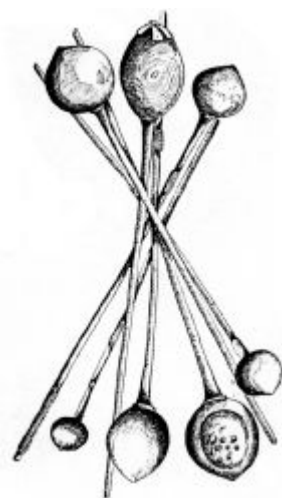
Not included in the above list, but geographically at least associated with the Chaga, was Taveta, a settlement on the eastern slopes of Kilimanjaro inhabited by a mixture of indigenous people and Masai refugees from their civil wars. Harry Johnston describes Taveta as a 'republic', ruled by an oligarchy of four or five elders or *wa-zee*. It

was entirely surrounded by impenetrable forest, through which the inhabitants had made narrow tunnels blocked by wooden gates, and so was almost completely safe from raids by the Masai or other hostile tribes. It was also very fertile and well-watered, and produced reliable surpluses of food. This 'little African Arcadia', as Joseph Thomson calls it, was therefore an ideal spot for travellers to replenish their supplies in complete security, and in which to take refuge in the event of hostilities with the Masai. It was to Taveta, for example, that Thomson retreated after being forced to abandon his first attempt to cross Masailand. The people invariably welcomed Arab and European caravans, and Thomson pays tribute to their 'peaceable habits, their great hospitality ... and surprising honesty'. This welcome contrasted with the elaborate precautions which they took to keep out the Masai, although when Johnston reached Taveta in 1884 he found that the vigilance of the people was greatly relaxed, and that the guards had been removed from the gates. He was told that the Masai were no longer a threat, having learned by then the futility of trying to attack them.

The first of a series of outstanding Chaga war leaders was Orombo of Keni, one of the clan chiefs of the Rombo. Around the beginning of the 19th century he led many successful raids against his neighbours, which encouraged warriors from other clans to join him and enabled him to establish a brief hegemony over all of Rombo. He was said to be of Masai descent, and was a skilful fighter who once killed an elephant single-handed by cutting off its trunk with a sword. By the second quarter of the century, however, the most powerful of the states was Machame, whose chief Rengua was remembered as the most feared man on Kilimanjaro. He constantly harassed his neighbours in Oria and Kibosho, and became notorious for a treacherous massacre of young Oria warriors at an initiation ceremony. Eventually the men of Kibosho defeated him and burnt his village, and some time before 1850 Kibosho in turn began to emerge as the leading power in the region, under its chief (or 'Sultan', as Chaga leaders were now beginning to style themselves) Lokila.

Lokila's successor, Sina, who ruled from about 1870 until 1897, became the most famous leader in Chaga history. Sina's most celebrated exploit typifies the Chaga love of deception in warfare. Some time during the 1870s a diplomatic mission arrived in Machame to invite its chief to help install a new leader in Kibosho, as the much feared Sina had died. In fact Sina was alive and well, but had placed a dead goat in his house so that the smell would provide proof of his emissaries' claims. When the Machame warriors arrived in Kibosho, Sina fired off a gun as a signal, then charged out at them as his men fell on them from all sides. The shocked Machame men fled in panic,

straight into another ambush which had been laid in a swamp on their line of retreat. Sina followed up this victory with three successful invasions of Machame, which reduced the once-powerful state to impotence.



Wooden 'knobkerries' from the Kilimanjaro region. These examples are probably Chaga, but those used by the Masai and other tribes would have been very similar. (Mrs M. French-Sheldon, Sultan to Sultan, 1892)

The Chaga chief who had the most dealings with the outside world was Rindi of Moshi, better known by his Swahili name of Mandara, who came to power in the early 1860s and shrewdly exploited Moshi's position near the caravan routes from the coast. Mandara welcomed a succession of Arab caravans, corresponded with the Sultan of Zanzibar, Queen Victoria, and the German Kaiser, and managed to convince the Europeans that he was the ruler of the whole mountain, although in reality his power was always overshadowed by that of Kibosho. In the 1860s he joined with the Arabs in slave raids on his neighbours, and in 1871 he detained and robbed Charles New, the second European to visit the mountain. Soon after this an alliance of other Chaga groups drove him into exile, but he made friends with the Masai of Arusha and persuaded them to invade Chaga and reinstate him. In 1884 Mandara manipulated Harry Johnston's Royal Society expedition into helping him against his enemies, threatening anyone who opposed him with 'his' white man, and trying to persuade the explorer to stay and train his men into a regular army, as he knew Mathews was doing at Zanzibar. Johnston eventually saw through him, and discovered that he controlled only a small part of the lower slopes of the mountain. In 1889, when Hans Meyer arrived to climb the peak, Mandara's guides led him to the snowline by a circuitous

route in order to prevent him making contact with his enemies in Kibosho.

By 1891 the old chief was bedridden and the Germans had occupied his country, building their own post within sight of his village. Nevertheless, a passage in the American traveller Mary French-Sheldon's account of her visit that year shows that the colonial authorities were still wary of the man she calls 'the ambitious, brutish and abominable Sultan Mandara ... much feared for his cleverness and duplicity'. Mandara had been extorting ivory from neighbouring chiefs by pretending that the Germans had appointed him to collect taxes on their behalf, and the German commander, Baron von Witzslaben, had threatened to fire on his village with his artillery unless the ivory was handed over. The Baron was afraid that the Sultan might try to take Mrs French-Sheldon hostage, and only permitted her to visit the village with an escort of German askaris and covered by a cannon trained on the chief's house.

The Battle of Kibosho, February 1891

The German administration had arrived in 1890, when Carl Peters selected the unwarlike state of Marangu as the site for his 'Kilimanjaro Station'. War with Kibosho was precipitated soon afterwards when the Germans, attempting to organise their new territory, inadvertently placed Sultan Sina under the authority of one of his own vassals. Sina responded by taking down the German tricolour and running up the flag of Zanzibar. A German column set out from Moshi on 11 February 1891 under the command of Major Hermann von Wissmann, with three companies totalling about 300 native soldiers (elsewhere Rochus Schmidt, our main source, says 380, but this seems too many for three companies), plus nine German officers and seven NCOs. Sina's rival Mandara was ordered to provide a force of 400 Chaga warriors to accompany the expedition. The order of march was: the 1st (Sudanese) company under Lieutenant Sulzer; artillery detachment of one 37 mm revolver cannon and one Maxim gun; 2nd and 3rd (Zulu) companies under Lieutenants von Zitzewitz and Prince; ambulance corps and baggage (250 porters), with one section of soldiers as escort; and the 400 Chaga warriors, commanded by Lieutenant von Eltz. Mandara's men were armed with breech-loading rifles (mostly Sniders), but were intended to use their local knowledge to pursue and exploit the victory rather than to fight in the actual battle. They were issued with white armbands to distinguish them from the enemy, and were divided into ad hoc groups of unknown size, each led by a local chief with a German flag.

Sina had between 600 and 800 men under his command, nearly

all equipped with rifles including a large number of breech-loaders. The Germans believed that the Kibosho warriors were very short of ammunition, but this turned out not to be the case. The Kibosho position consisted of a series of narrow ridges, densely planted with bananas. On the highest ridge was the Sultan's *boma* — an enclosure surrounded by a wooden stockade and a ditch 3 m (9.8 ft) wide by 5 m (16.4 ft) deep. Inside this was what Schmidt describes as 'a maze of ditches, palisades, hedges, barred gates, pits and other obstacles'. These had been built piecemeal over many years, and the lack of a coherent plan only made the defences more formidable, as any stranger would inevitably become hopelessly lost in the labyrinth. It was not even possible to overlook the fort and plan an assault from outside, as the whole area was thickly overgrown with banana trees and the defences could hardly be seen at all from a distance.



Beaded cap worn by Chaga chiefs or 'sultans'. (Mrs M. French-Sheldon, Sultan to Sultan, 1892)

On 12 February the German column set out on its final approach along a forest path, on which the defenders had placed magic charms at intervals. Mandara's men were reluctant to pass these until they saw the askaris step over them without ill effects. Eventually they came in sight of the first enemy position. The Kibosho warriors had cleared all the vegetation from one hill, and dug deep trenches along the ridge, from which they opened 'a lively fire'. However, this apparently strong position was actually only a lightly held outpost, and as soon as the leading askari company began to reply with volley fire the defenders evacuated it and disappeared into the forest. The next hill was still wooded, and only the presence of the

red Zanzibari flag revealed that this was Sina's main line of resistance.

Wissmann regrouped behind the ridge which the enemy had just abandoned, then deployed into two columns: the 3rd Zulu company on the left, and the other two companies, with the artillery, on the right. Both columns advanced simultaneously, with skirmishers deployed in front. Half-way up the next ridge they sighted the fortifications for the first time, and began to come under fire. Wissmann led his Sudanese company into the fort, followed by the 2nd company, and fought his way round the perimeter on the inside, exchanging fire with successive groups of defenders at ranges of 20–30 paces. Meanwhile the 3rd company had also broken into the *boma*, and the two columns eventually converged by advancing towards the sound of firing. After about two hours of fighting they met in an open square in front of a sort of inner citadel built of stone, which was still held in force by the enemy.

The other Kibosho fighters had been dislodged from their positions but were not routed, and they now began to reassemble behind the fortifications surrounding the square and fire on the Germans from all directions. The askaris were exhausted, and the Chaga auxiliaries who were supposed to exploit the victory were too far behind to intervene. Wissmann was therefore forced to retire, using the route pioneered by the 3rd Company to extricate his men from the maze. The revolver cannon was used to give covering fire for the retreat, although it is not clear where it was deployed. It can hardly have been manhandled into the fort and over the ditches and palisades inside, so it seems likely that it had remained outside, and simply fired blind into the banana trees to discourage any pursuit.

German losses so far had been only two killed and 11 wounded, and Wissmann succeeded in evacuating all the casualties. He now reoccupied the Kibosho trenches on the first ridge and deployed the Maxim gun to provide defensive fire. Soon afterwards Sina's warriors launched a frontal attack, which was broken up by the Maxim gun with heavy losses. For the rest of the afternoon Kibosho snipers harassed the trenches by creeping up to close range, firing, and then retreating before the defenders could retaliate. By nightfall this activity had stopped, but at midnight Wissmann ordered the Maxim to fire a series of bursts in the direction of the *boma*. The fire could not be observed, but from the 'furious howls' of the enemy it was obvious that it had caused casualties. Survivors from the Kibosho side later recalled that the ability of the Maxim to inflict damage even in the dark was a major factor in breaking their morale.

But early the next morning the German scouts reported that the enemy were already repairing the damaged sections of the *boma*. Three platoons of Sudanese under *Chef* Johannes were immediately

formed into an assault party, which again fought its way through to the central square. Two platoons provided covering fire for the third, which physically tore down every obstacle in the way. There was still fierce opposition, but it was much weaker than the day before, and Johannes' men managed to storm the stone citadel in the face of enemy fire. They set fire to the houses inside and raised the German flag in place of the Zanzibari one.

The Kibosho warriors then began to flee from the fortress — pursued by Mandara's men, who had so far taken no part in the battle. Rounding up thousands of cattle and all the weapons they could find, the Germans returned to Moshi, the Sudanese beating off a half-hearted ambush on the way. Soon afterwards Sina sent messengers to offer unconditional surrender. Schmidt estimated that the Kibosho army had lost about 200 dead. Total losses in Wissmann's force were four dead and 16 wounded.

The Battle of Moshi, 12 August 1892

Wissmann's ally Mandara died later in 1891, and in the following year Mandara's son Meli rose in revolt. The German headquarters was still at Marangu, whose Sultan, Mireali, was later suspected of having secretly engineered Meli's rebellion in order to consolidate his own position as the Germans' chief ally. The first expedition against Moshi, led by von Bulow in June 1892, ran into an ambush and was almost annihilated. Both its German officers were killed, and the surviving askaris abandoned Marangu in panic. For nearly two months, until another expedition could be sent, there was no German presence on Mount Kilimanjaro. Mireali saved his capital from destruction by sending his own men into the abandoned German post, with instructions to fire off their guns at intervals and give the impression that it was still manned by regular troops. He also spread rumours that a new white commandant had already arrived. Meli was apparently taken in by this trick, and did not attack.

At the end of July the Germans did return with a powerful column under Colonel von Schele. In a surprising diplomatic turnaround, Sultan Sina supplied them with 800 of his riflemen. Von Schele marched out on 11 August, taking a different route from the one which had led von Bulow to his death, and approached Meli's *boma* unexpectedly from the west. The order of battle was:

1st Company (Johannes)	116 askaris
3rd Company (Podlech)	124 askaris
4th Company (Mergler)	113 askaris
5th Company (von Elpons)	110 askaris
Mixed Company (Ax)	103 askaris
Artillery detachment	1 x 65 mm field
gun	1 x 37 mm
mountain gun	1 x Maxim
600 porters	
800 Chaga allies from Kibosho	

There was also a total of 23 German officers and NCOs.

At 6:15 a.m. on 12 August the Germans began their advance on Meli's *boma*. Like Sina's, it was hidden in a dense banana plantation, and there was some uncertainty about its location until a guide sent by Mireali pointed it out. According to the expedition's Medical Officer, Doctor Becker, some soldiers carried incendiary grenades, which they used to reveal the position of the fort by setting fire to some nearby huts. The artillery was then deployed to give covering fire.

There is a discrepancy here in our sources. Von Schele's report speaks of three Maxim guns being placed in trees to fire into the *boma*, but according to Becker there was only one Maxim present, the other two guns being heavier pieces which could hardly have been hoisted into the trees, let alone fired from such a position. In any case, the supporting fire was not very effective, because the enemy positions could not be observed directly. Lieutenant Ax led his mixed company in a bayonet charge on a position which had been located from the muzzle flashes of the Moshi riflemen, only to find that their fire trench was protected by a 15-foot (4.6 m) ditch which the askaris could not cross. With several of his men wounded Ax fell back and organised another assault, preceded by a few volleys which he hoped would unnerve the defenders. This second assault also failed, and at this point Ax was killed. There was now only one German left with the company, Sergeant Weinberger, who led the men forward for a third time. According to Becker: 'The flagstaff in Weinberger's hand was smashed by an enemy bullet, the flag was riddled with holes, but the standard-bearer himself luckily escaped unhurt, though many of our coloured soldiers fell.' When this third attack collapsed, von Schele ordered the company to stay on the defensive. Elsewhere, however, the ditch around the *boma* was found to be undefended, and the 1st and 4th Companies crossed unopposed. Johannes sent a runner to von Schele to suggest that the whole force should follow him through this gap and then redeploy for a final attack on the *boma*. This was done, although it left Doctor Becker's dressing station dangerously exposed

to enemy fire.

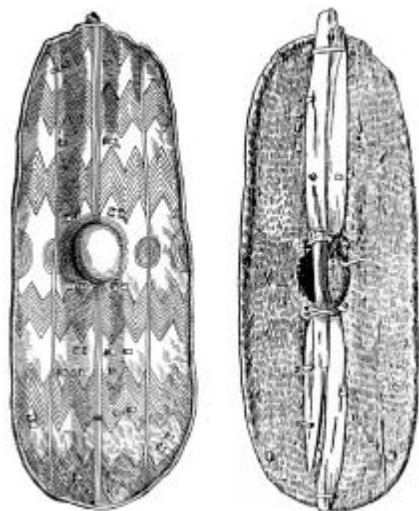
The new deployment placed the 1st Company and the artillery in front, about 500 yds (457 m) from the *boma*. They were accompanied by Sina's men, who had the thankless task of clearing a path by cutting down the banana trees as they advanced. The other companies drew up slightly to the rear in close formation. The artillery opened fire as the men advanced, and soon the Moshi warriors were in retreat. It turned out that Meli's *boma* was not as formidable as Sina's, and had never been intended to resist a serious assault. Instead Meli withdrew his men and regrouped them in a gully on the far side of a river. An hour and a half later, at about 2:00 p.m., they re-emerged and apparently prepared for a mass attack, but the German troops were now in position on a ridge overlooking the river and poured fire into them from this commanding height. Meli now asked for peace terms, freely admitting — according to Becker — that he had been a 'sheep's head' for thinking that he was stronger than the Germans. He was allowed to remain as chief, but had to build a new post for the Germans next to his own house. Meanwhile the Kibosho contingent avenged themselves for his father's intervention against them by stealing all his cattle. Meli had lost about 135 killed and a similar number wounded. German losses were five dead and 24 wounded. In 1900 Meli was hanged by the Germans as a result of another plot by Mireali, who persuaded them that his rival was again planning to rebel. This marked the end of Chaga resistance on Kilimanjaro.

Equipment and tactics

For most of the 19th century the Chaga were at the forefront of developments in weaponry and tactics, helped no doubt by their proximity to both the Arabs and the Masai. Rombo was the district most exposed to raids from the steppe to the north, and traditional accounts of the fighting between the Masai and the Rombo clan of the Ngasseni probably give a good idea of how the rest of the Chaga fought at the beginning of the century. The Ngasseni — whose war cry is rendered as '*Wuui! Wuui! Otiemagati!*' — would await the enemy in the woods and banana groves, drawn up in three lines: a row of men carrying shields in front, then spearmen, and behind them the archers. The conservative Rombo continued to use these tactics throughout the century, but elsewhere in Chaga Masai influence became paramount from the 1860s onwards. At least two chiefs, Kirema of Oria and Mdusio of Sira, are known to have lived among the Masai at this time and learnt their fighting methods from them.

The other major influence on tactics was Sina of Kibosho, who

appears to have been an outstanding innovator. He imposed strict discipline on his warriors, accommodating and training them in his own stone palace: it was said that the penalty for sleeping at home was death. He kept all their weapons in his own arsenal, issuing them only when required, and is believed to have introduced the broad-bladed Masai spear to Kibosho, as well as inventing a throwing spear of his own with a narrow blade 'as long as the human arm'. His armies usually attacked at dawn, the advance guard first spreading out and burning a few widely scattered huts in order to confuse the enemy about exactly where the main body was advancing. They then charged in three waves — men with throwing spears in front, supported by a line of musketeers, and those wielding stabbing spears in the rear as a reserve.



Mrs French-Sheldon visited the Rombo on Mount Kilimanjaro in 1891, by which date they were the only branch of the Chaga who had not adopted either Masai weaponry or Arab firearms. These drawings of a Rombo shield made of hippopotamus hide shows what the equipment of other Chaga warriors may have been like in the first half of the 19th century. (Mrs M. French-Sheldon, Sultan to Sultan, 1892)

Firearms began to reach Chaga during the 1860s. Mandara was the first chief to acquire them, through his contacts with the Arabs, and he naturally exploited them to gain a psychological advantage over his rivals. By the 1880s Swahili traders were buying up Snider rifles from men discharged by European expeditions and selling them in Chaga, where the *bunduki sna-ider* was naturally preferred to the old *bunduki za fataki* or muzzle-loader. In 1884 half of Mireali of Marangu's 400 warriors were armed with Sniders. Mandara even had a couple of small cannon to guard his stockade, and asked Johnston to teach his smiths how to manufacture more of them. Nevertheless,

Johnston was convinced that the spearmen still inflicted the great majority of the casualties in Chaga warfare, as few men had any idea of how to aim properly with their guns.

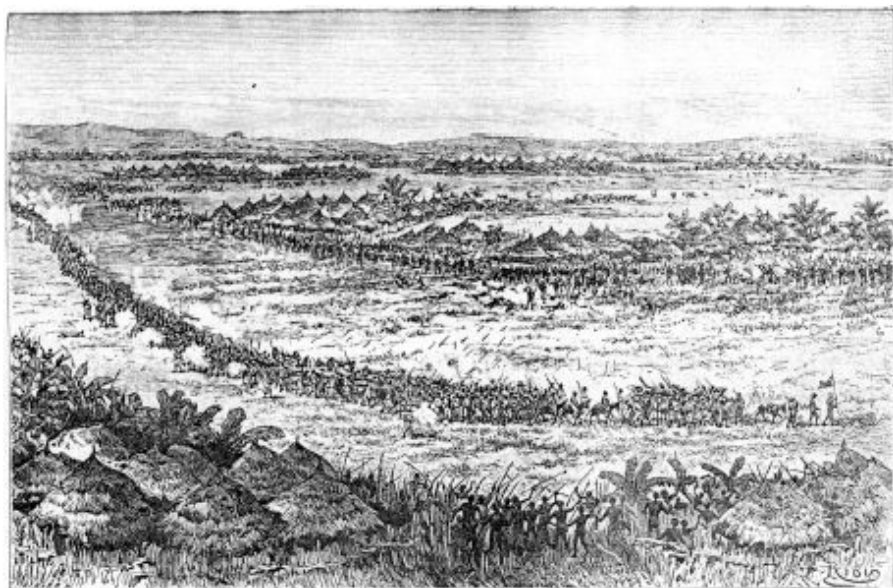
THE NYAMWEZI

Unyamwezi, the 'Land of the Moon', was a high plateau about the size of England in the middle of what is now Tanzania. Stanley describes it as 'the finest country in the whole of East and Central Africa'. For a number of reasons its inhabitants were among the most important tribes in the region. Their geographical position dominated the routes from Zanzibar to Lake Tanganyika and Uganda, and economically they dominated the hinterland because of their success as traders: 'Hereditarily the greatest traders in Africa,' says Speke, adding that they were 'the only people who, for love of barter and change, will leave their own country as porters and go to the coast, and they do so with as much zest as our country-folk: he is a born traveller and trader.'

Politically the Nyamwezi were not united, although there was a persistent tradition that at some time in the past they had controlled a great empire under a king called Mshimba or Mwezi. The warlord Mirambo, interviewed by the missionary Southon, said that the name 'Nyamwezi' was not a local one but had been given to them by the Arabs, who were unable to distinguish between the related but distinct tribes of the region. In the late 19th century there were three exceptionally powerful royal houses ruling over the districts of Unyanyembe, Ugara, and Usagozi, whose heads were known as *ntemi*, or 'king'. Elsewhere the Nyamwezi were divided into countless small villages and chiefdoms, each under the authority of a chief who often took the courtesy title of *ntemi*, even though, according to Stanley, only the three rulers mentioned above were really entitled to it.

Altogether six large sub-tribes were recognised, according to the account of Philippe Broyon, a Swiss sailor who lived with them in the 1870s. The Sumbua and Takama in the west and south-west were mainly farmers and very similar to each other, varying slightly in appearance but not in customs. The Zinja or Sinza lived further to the north-west, and in Speke's words were 'more energetic and actively built' than their neighbours. They too were mostly farmers, and were ruled by Bahima chiefs like the neighbouring Haya and other peoples west of Lake Victoria (see pp.101-2 for a discussion of the Bahima). The Konongo in the south of Unyamwezi were very poor, and were not traders. The Sukuma were the most numerous branch, and inhabited the country northwards as far as Lake Victoria, including the central zone known as Unyanyembe. They too were generally

conservative, and preferred stock-raiding to trading. They were 'not courageous', says Broyon, and fought only with spears (though other witnesses also mention bows). Each Sukuma village was ruled by its own independent *ntemi* and defended by a warrior caste of young men, or *basumba*, who were organised on an age-set basis like the Bari, Masai, and similar Nilotic tribes.



Stanley's Emin Pasha Relief Expedition fighting its way through Usukuma en route to Bagamoyo in 1889. While not very clear, this drawing gives an impression of the sort of running fight which often occurred when heavily armed expeditions marched through hostile country. The Sukuma were unable to get to close quarters in the face of the askaris' rifles, but turned out in their thousands to demonstrate against the invaders. Note the Turkish flag at the head of the caravan, borne by one of Emin Pasha's Sudanese troops; this may have provoked much of the hostility, being associated with the Arab slavers. (H.M. Stanley, In Darkest Africa, 1890)

The 'classic' Nyamwezi with whom outsiders mainly came into contact were the Garaganza, the 'most intelligent and active tribe', who lived nearest to the east coast. They were supposed to be the former ruling tribe of the old Nyamwezi empire, and were still the most prosperous. During the 1850s and 1860s they were introduced to slave-raiding by the Arabs, and often combined trading missions with raids for slaves when opportunity offered. Several other peoples lived in Unyamwezi and mingled with the natives. Apart from the Bahima in Usinza, there were also related groups elsewhere in the country, known as Watusi, who had once oppressed the people and stolen their cattle but had long ago been reduced to servile status themselves, and now worked mainly as cowherds. The population of Usinza also

included a sizeable Ha element, as well as wandering bands of Tuta, a branch of the Ngoni.

The Kimbu, who lived to the south-east of Unyamwezi, are sometimes regarded as yet another branch of the Nyamwezi people. They were certainly very closely related, but they lacked any large-scale political organisation comparable with the Nyamwezi *ntemi* system. In the early 19th century the Kimbu were split into three main groups — the Nyisamba, Nyitumba, and Igulwibi — which were further subdivided into about 30 minor chiefdoms. In the 1830s the Sango drove many of them northwards into the Mgunda Mkali wilderness on the border with Ugogo, where Speke and Cameron later found them industriously clearing the jungle for agriculture. The Kimbu bore the brunt of two big Ngoni raids in 1839 and 1850, but by the 1860s their main settlement at Kiwele was becoming prosperous owing to its position on the trade routes from the coast. The first attempt to unify the Kimbu was made by the warlord Nyungu-ya-Mawe (see pp.71–73).

The Arabs had been settled in Unyamwezi since about 1852, when they began to build permanent houses at their base at Tabora (otherwise known as Kazeh) in Unyanyembe. At first many of their armed slaves deserted and joined the Nyamwezi, but the Arabs stayed on and made a treaty with the current *ntemi* exempting them from taxes on trade. War broke out when the next ruler, Manua Sera, tried to reintroduce taxes, was driven out of Tabora, and raised the surrounding country against the foreigners. Speke and Grant found themselves in the middle of this war when they reached Unyanyembe in 1861. Manua Sera had just captured an entire Arab caravan carrying ammunition, and his attacks on the route from Zanzibar were gradually throttling Arab trade. Ignoring Speke's offer to mediate, a group of Arabs led by Snay bin Osman marched out to attack the Nyamwezi but were instead diverted into Ugogo and defeated (see p.57). After this, Manua Sera intensified his attacks and placed Tabora itself under siege, until Speke finally managed to arrange a conference and patch up a temporary peace. Fighting soon broke out again, however, and continued for four more years until the Arabs finally hunted down Manua Sera and killed him.

Unyamwezi was generally friendly territory for European expeditions, although Stanley found the Sukuma people hostile in 1889 as a consequence of the general unrest which was afflicting the region and the increasing pressure placed on local resources by trading and exploring caravans. Two years earlier, for example, a party of 150 guns under an Arab named Khambi Mbya had been massacred in Usui after an argument over access to water. In Usongo in 1889 one chief, Mittinginya, was being threatened simultaneously

by the Tuta Ngoni on one side and the Nyaturu on the other, and had taken the drastic step of inviting in a horde of Masai to protect him. The Masai had frightened off his enemies, then gone on to steal all his donkeys. When Stanley left him, Mittinginya was still holding on in the middle of all these perils, thanks to the solidity of his fortified homestead or *tembe*, and the presence nearby of his friend Charles Stokes, the Irish missionary turned gun-runner. Stokes had taken a Nyamwezi wife, set up a permanent base in the country, and by the beginning of the 1890s had gained such a reputation among the people that many of them expected him to protect them against the encroaching German forces. (Stokes, however, accepted employment with the Germans instead.)

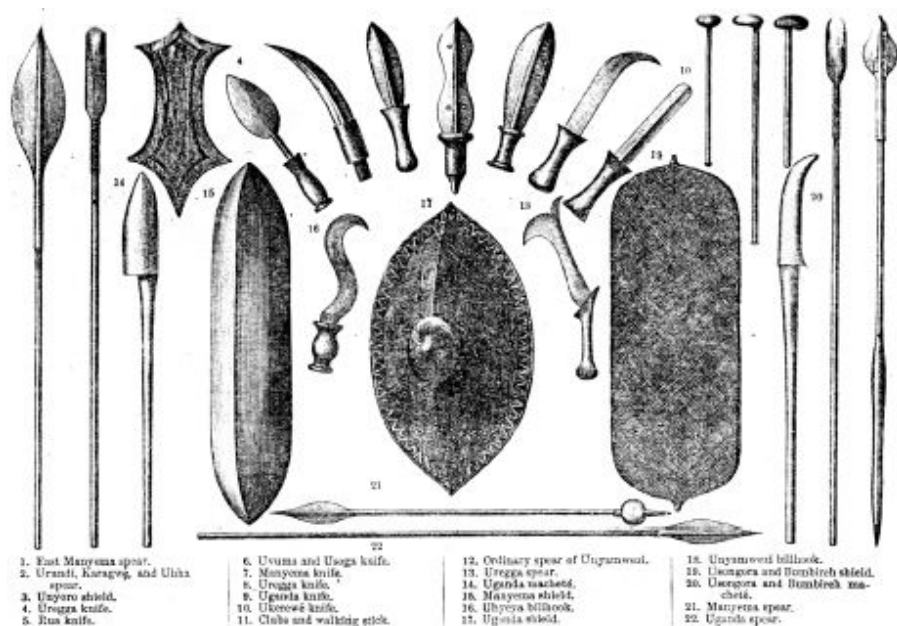
The last of the *ntemi* to wield any real power was Isike, who came to the throne of Unyanyembe in 1876 and survived several attempts by the warlords Mirambo and Nyungu-ya-Mawe, as well as by the Arabs, to depose him. In 1890 a German expedition under Emin Pasha established a garrison at Tabora, but the new colonial rulers made themselves unpopular with the Nyamwezi by allowing their troops to rob and assault the populace. In April 1892 Isike launched a revolt against the Germans, setting up his base at Itetemia, which Lionel Decle called 'the best fortified village of the whole of Africa'.

The Siege of Itetemia, 1892–93

The Germans attacked Itetemia three times during 1892: in June with a force of 76 askaris; then two months later with 300 local reinforcements; and again in September, when they fielded Ngoni allies, as well as local Nyamwezi and some of the late Mirambo's former 'Ruga-Ruga' gunmen. All these attempts were beaten off. On the last occasion their Nyamwezi allies refused to attack, but merely fired their muskets into the air instead. A column of 200 reinforcements trying to fight its way through to join Isike was ambushed and destroyed by the Ruga-Ruga, but the king himself remained defiant, and several other local chiefs were inspired to join his revolt.

On 10 January 1893 the Germans began another assault under the command of Lieutenant Tom Prince. Their force consisted of six German officers and NCOs, 66 askaris, 80 irregular native auxiliaries, a mortar, and a revolver cannon. Covered by the artillery, they dug trenches up to the fortifications, and then on the 12th they stormed the walls. The Germans gradually gained the upper hand in the street fighting that followed, and finally Isike withdrew into his house and blew himself up with gunpowder. The remaining insurgent

strongholds all fell before the end of the year, although it was not until August 1898 that the last rebel chief, Katunga, was captured. The isolated German post at Mwanza on the shore of Lake Victoria, which Captain Langheld had established in 1892, was intermittently attacked by the Sukuma until early in the 20th century.



A collection of military equipment from western Tanganyika, drawn by H.M. Stanley. Among the items of interest are the 'billhooks' (numbers 16 and 18) which were used by the Nyamwezi and perhaps also by the Hehe. (H.M. Stanley, *Through the Dark Continent*, 1879)

Organisation and tactics

Political disunity, and the absence of many of the young men on trading expeditions, prevented the traditional Nyamwezi chiefs from raising large armies. The most powerful *ntemi*, the ruler of Uuyanyembe, could raise only about 3,000 warriors out of a total population of 20,000. On the whole, the Nyamwezi enjoyed a mixed reputation as fighters. Speke dismisses them as 'wanting in pluck and gallantry'. 'Arrant cowards', adds Stanley, who describes how their caravans made 'a great blustering show' among less powerful tribes, but slunk 'humbly' through Uuyogo for fear of the inhabitants. Nevertheless, Uuyamwezi itself was seldom invaded, and suffered less from endemic warfare than most neighbouring territories. Stanley points to two good indicators of 'ancient, secure, and well-established countries': the presence of large herds of cattle and large numbers of

old people.

The armies of the traditional *ntemi* usually avoided military campaigns outside their own frontiers, although in 1875 Stanley referred to the depredations of Nyamwezi slavers on Lake Tanganyika, armed by the Arabs and carrying 'blood-red banners after the Arab style'. Cameron was told that the father of Liowa, the *ntemi* of Ugara, had once raised an army to conquer Bagamoyo but had died on his way to the coast, after which his kingdom broke up. Nyamwezi trading caravans would fight if attacked, however, and were often large enough to resemble armies on the march. In 1890, for example, Bishop Tucker encountered a party, organised in conjunction with Charles Stokes, which comprised 2,500 armed tribesmen, divided into 15 'camps or companies'. The officers in charge of the columns were known as *wanyampara*, or 'grandfathers'. In the German colonial period the Nyamwezi continued to operate these caravans, often headed by a German flag.

It was among the Nyamwezi that the famous 'Ruga-Ruga' first made their appearance. This term was widely used for the detribalised and rootless young hooligans of the region — often orphaned or displaced by war or slave-raiding — who made a precarious living as mercenaries, bandits, or elephant hunters. The followers of warlords like Mirambo and Nyung-ya-Mawe were also referred to as Ruga-Ruga, as were the semi-professional militia of local origin which some Nyamwezi groups raised to defend their villages. Although originally the term had no connection with firearms, it seems that by the last quarter of the century possession of a gun was often regarded as an essential requirement for such a professional fighter. According to Cameron, whereas in the 1850s a musket had been a rare and treasured heirloom, by the time of his visit to Unyamwezi in 1873 as many as half of the warriors owned one. In 1861 Manua Sera had a bodyguard of 30 men armed with guns, and Speke refers several times to his followers shooting with muskets, although he does not say what proportion of them was so equipped. By the 1890s nearly every fighting man owned a firearm, and breech-loaders such as the Snider were becoming common. By then, unlike most tribes, the Nyamwezi had learned to repair broken guns, and the Kimbu were even manufacturing their own gunpowder.

Before the widespread adoption of firearms, Nyamwezi tactics seem to have involved open order skirmishing in preference to hand-to-hand fighting. In 1857 Speke witnessed a number of mock battles among the spear and bow-armed tribesmen of Umanda, who engaged in constant swift rushes and retreats, dodging from side to side to avoid imaginary missiles. These activities presumably reflected the tactics of real combat, for which they were intended as practice. 'Their

great principle in their warfare,' says Speke, 'appears to be, that no one should be still ... dodging and squatting, and springing and flying in the most wild and fantastic manner.'

In defence the Nyamwezi relied heavily on their well-built *tembes*, large rectangular buildings surrounding a central courtyard, which presented a formidable obstacle to any attacker not supported by artillery. In contrast to the much more lightly constructed versions seen nearer the coast, the walls of the Nyamwezi *tembes* were made of solid logs plastered with clay. They could be up to 3 ft (0.9 m) thick and would stop even a rifle bullet, although the flat thatched roofs were a potential source of weakness. Access was by a narrow gate in one or two of the sides, while all the other doors and windows opened inwards into the courtyard. The interior was divided into numerous small rooms, which would enable a determined defender to fight on even if the outer walls were breached. Often an entire village and its cattle would be enclosed within one or more large *tembes*. The French explorer Lionel Declé says that the inhabitants deliberately allowed wild bees to build their nests in the outer walls, because they would attack any enemy trying to climb up them. Stanley found that the walls of his *tembe* in Tabora could be quickly loopholed if necessary, and believed that with a garrison of musketeers he could have held it against 10,000 Africans, or even 500 Europeans if they were not supported by cannon.

THE HA

Uhha was a country of flat, open grassland east of Lake Tanganyika (Stanley likens it to Nebraska), inhabited by a mixture of local farmers and Bahima cattle herders. Unlike most similar arrangements, however, the Bahima did not constitute an exclusive aristocracy in Uhha, but allowed the locals to keep cattle and bear arms. The Ha were nominally subject to a single king who ruled over two great semi-independent provinces called Kimenyi and Antari. Stanley, who in 1871 was the first white man to enter the country, records that the village chiefs deliberately misled him about the political situation in order to extract more *hongo*. A chieftain claiming to be the *mutware* or viceroy of Kimenyi claimed a toll of ten pieces of cloth on behalf of the king in return for permission to pass through his territory, but at the next village the caravan was stopped again. Here the chief, Mionvu, informed Stanley that he was in fact the real *mutware*, and that the toll which he had already paid was one levied by the chief of the previous village on his own account. He, Mionvu, was authorised to collect the *hongo* due to the king, which would be 100 cloths. Finally agreeing to pay 75, Stanley marched on to the next village,

where he met a man who claimed to be the king's brother, and of course put in his own demand for *hongo*. Stanley gave up at this point and retreated, sneaking around the edges of Uhha by forced marches, in constant fear of attack, until he reached Lake Tanganyika. No explorer entered Uhha proper again until 1893, when Lionel Declé was forced to take this route on his way from Ujiji to Tabora in order to avoid extensive grass fires. He found the people still armed only with bows and spears; they threatened him and robbed his camp at night, but he managed to avoid serious conflict.



*A tembe, a four-sided building of a type used for defence by most of the inland tribes of Tanganyika, illustrated by Stanley. The walls of Gogo tembes were flimsily constructed of sticks daubed with mud and offered no protection against a musket ball, whereas in the more forested areas further west, such as Unyamwezi, they were solidly built with thick logs, and Stanley considered them to be proof against anything except artillery. (H.M. Stanley, *How I Found Livingstone*, 1872)*

We have no detailed account of the Ha in battle, but they seem to have had great faith in their own prowess, and particularly in their numbers. Stanley mentions the 'perfect confidence' with which Mionvu's 50 warriors confronted his caravan with its 45 armed askaris. He discussed with his Swahili headmen the possibility of trying to fight his way through, but they were terrified at the prospect. They claimed that the Arabs always paid the *hongo*, as it was impossible to fight the Ha. 'Every village will rise about us,' they explained, 'and how can forty-five men fight thousands of people? They would kill us all in a few minutes.' Mionvu himself made much the same point: 'Does the white man mean to fight? I know well he is

stronger than we are. His men have guns, and the Wahha have but bows and arrows, and spears; but Uhha is large, and our villages are many.'

Modern anthropologists state that the Ha had no military organisation at all beyond the village chiefs and their followers, which may be why we have no record of them campaigning outside their own borders. Nevertheless, they must have had an efficient system for mustering their warriors in the event of an attack, because they were never successfully invaded either. The Tuta Ngoni ventured into Uhha in the 1850s, but were quickly driven out and did not return. Even Mirambo failed to conquer the Ha, and had to settle for an uneasy co-existence with their chiefs. Stanley calls them 'competent and worthy champions' of all the local peoples against invaders. Perhaps the strongest evidence for their fighting prowess was the extraordinary impression of 'perfect security' which Stanley recorded on first entering the country; the villages were not surrounded by the usual walls, stockades, or natural obstacles, but were sited out on the open plains, completely unprotected, as if the population had nothing at all to fear from its neighbours.

MIRAMBO

Mirambo was perhaps the most famous of all the native military leaders of 19th-century East Africa, both in his own time and later. His background is obscure, but he was said to have been of Nyamwezi royal blood. 'Mirambo' was not his real name but a typical Nyamwezi nom de guerre, meaning 'heaps of corpses'. He claimed the mythical king Mshimba, eight generations before him, as his direct ancestor, and alleged that his grandfather was a chief who had been killed by the Tuta Ngoni when Mirambo was about ten years old (i.e., some time during the 1840s). He first came to prominence in 1871, when H.M. Stanley witnessed the opening moves of his war with the Arabs of Tabora and their rival Nyamwezi protégé, Mkasiwa. By this time Mirambo was already leading an army of several thousand Ruga-Ruga.

The Battles of Wilyankuru and Tabora, August 1871

Stanley, who was passing through Tabora on his expedition in search of Livingstone, accompanied the Arab army when it marched to attack Mirambo's frontier village of Zimbizo. The village fell after a brief skirmish and Stanley and most of the Arabs then went home, leaving only 20 Arabs and about 500 Swahili 'Wangwana' under Soud bin Sayd to advance on their opponent's main base at Wilyankuru. Mirambo had several hundred men in Wilyankuru, but he decided not to mount a rigid defence. Instead he withdrew his men from the far

side of the village, circled round, and concealed them in the tall grass on both sides of the path leading back towards Zimbizo. (Typically, Stanley tries to absolve himself of any blame for the ensuing events by claiming that he had meant to warn his allies to burn the grass before advancing, but that an attack of fever had prevented him from doing so.)

The Arabs plundered the village, and began the march home with their loot — 100 elephant tusks, 60 bales of cloth, and 200–300 slaves. Then the Ruga-Ruga emerged from ambush and assailed them with spears. There is no mention of Mirambo's men using firearms in this engagement, although many of them certainly possessed them. Nor is it clear whether they threw the spears or thrust with them at close quarters; Stanley, relying on the accounts of survivors, says that they 'stabbed' their victims, but also that Soud, after shooting two Ruga-Ruga with his double-barrelled gun, was transfixed by a weapon which was 'launched' at him. All 20 of the Arabs and about half of the 'Wangwana' were killed in the ambush, and the rest fled back to Tabora.

Two weeks later Mirambo followed up with a strike at Tabora. His 2,000 Ruga-Ruga were assisted by 1,000 Tuta Ngoni who had joined the war in search of loot, and who attacked in a separate column from a different direction. On seeing 'the plain around Tabora filled with approaching savages', as Stanley puts it, an Arab named Khamis bin Abdullah led four other Arabs and 80 armed slaves out to meet them. Mirambo's men were at first ordered to fall back, luring Khamis into a rash advance, but when the Ruga-Ruga finally charged all the slaves ran away. The five Arabs were then surrounded and shot down from a distance.

The Arab settlement at Tabora was not a single walled town, but consisted of numerous widely scattered *tembes*. Each was defended by its own occupants, as the Arabs no longer dared to face Mirambo in the open. The Ruga-Ruga and their allies drove off all the cattle in the town and stormed at least one *tembe*, but then withdrew, leaving most of the strongholds — including the one occupied by Stanley — intact. Mirambo lost about 200 men, the Arabs 26. A month later Mirambo attacked another Arab village at Mfuto but was beaten off, after which the war lapsed into stalemate. His forces continued to disrupt the Arabs' trade, however, causing the price of ivory on the coast to double, while in retaliation the Arabs cut off his supply of gunpowder.

Early in 1872 the Arabs were so hard pressed that they asked the Sultan of Zanzibar for aid. A small force was sent under Amir bin Sultan, but rivalry among the different Arab leaders prevented them agreeing on a co-ordinated strategy, and so Amir was withdrawn. Mirambo had survived the military threat, but a Zanzibari embargo on

gunpowder imports from the coast caused difficulties until he found a new source of supply, via the Portuguese in Mozambique. Trade eventually resumed, and by the time of Stanley's second visit in 1876 Mirambo and the Arabs of Tabora were at peace. Mirambo had not abandoned his warlike ambitions, however. The missionary Southon, who visited him a few years later, records that he and his officers 'spend their whole time planning, preparing for or actually engaging in a war of greater or lesser magnitude'. From his capital at Urambo, west of Tabora, Mirambo's 'empire' was extended to cover the whole region between Lakes Victoria and Tanganyika. Many of his victims were rival Nyamwezi chieftains, but he also campaigned against the people of Uhha, Ujiji, and other neighbouring regions. He was defeated in only three of these campaigns. He failed in his attempts to subdue the Nyaturu (see p.58) and the Ha; he also (according to Southon) invaded Burundi, which 'proved more than a match for him'.

By the time Stanley passed through the country on his way to Lake Victoria in 1875, all the inhabitants were in awe of Mirambo. The explorer records how whole tribes would flee as his expedition approached, having mistaken it for one of the warlord's armies. In 1883 the German explorer Hermann von Wissmann, ambushed by a group of Ha near the River Malagarazi, escaped by pointing to a scar on his arm and shouting 'Mirambo!' Believing that the German must be a blood brother of the great Nyamwezi, the Ha did not dare to attack. Mirambo had given an even more impressive demonstration of his own power in 1881, when he assured a party of missionaries that they would be able to travel all the way to Lake Victoria without having to pay *hongo*. To their surprise they found that his command was obeyed by every chief along the route, not one of whom attempted to impose a toll.

Mirambo always tried to remain on good terms with Europeans. He made a friendly visit to Stanley in 1876, and three years later he claimed to have called off a planned attack on Ujiji when he discovered that there were English missionaries there. The British Consul at Zanzibar, John Kirk, was sympathetic to him, and moves were begun to commence formal relations with the British government. These plans came to grief in 1880, when an exploring expedition blundered into the middle of one of Mirambo's wars. This expedition, sponsored by King Leopold of Belgium and led by two Englishmen, Carter and Cadenhead, was on its way to Lake Tanganyika as part of a harebrained mission to test the suitability of Indian elephants for African exploration. It arrived at the village of a chief named Kasogera, who had just learned that an army commanded by Mirambo was on its way to attack him. Carter and Cadenhead set up their camp outside the village, but Kasogera — who apparently

suspected that they were allies of Mirambo — ordered them to move inside the stockade, threatening to attack them if they refused. The Englishmen obeyed, and were both killed when the Ruga-Ruga stormed the village soon afterwards, even though one native witness said that Carter fought heroically, killing 30 of his attackers before being struck down from behind.

Mirambo later expressed regret for the killings, and claimed not to have known that there were any white men present. One theory was that he had mistaken them for the universally hated Belgians, and was genuinely shocked to find that he had alienated his British allies. Kirk immediately broke off relations with him, and two expeditions set off from the coast to avenge the victims. One was despatched by the Sultan of Zanzibar, who was anxious to placate the British, but no fighting took place because most of the Zanzibaris deserted when they realised that they were being sent to fight Mirambo. A party of Belgians was also said to have gone after the warlord, inspired by a reward of 50,000 francs being offered for his head, but unfortunately nothing is known of its fate, and it may never have left the coast. Soon afterwards another confrontation with the Belgians occurred. A Captain Ramaeckers had established a station at Karema on Lake Tanganyika (see p.153), and in 1881 Mirambo arrived to demand tribute, as he claimed the area as his territory. Ramaeckers refused, but an expected attack was forestalled by the Belgian's sudden death. His successor, Jerome Becker, managed to negotiate a deal whereby the Belgians recognised Mirambo's authority but were exempted from payment.

In 1884 Mirambo became ill and handed over command of the army to his brother Kirunga, who succeeded him on his death in December. Kirunga lacked his predecessor's military genius and much of the empire which he had inherited broke away. He was killed in 1890 fighting the Ngoni, and when a German expedition under Emin Pasha arrived soon afterwards it encountered little resistance. Urambo was occupied and brought under German rule. In 1892, when war broke out between the Germans and the Nyamwezi chief Isike, the Ruga-Ruga of Urambo ignored Isike's call for unity and took the side of the colonial power.

Organisation and tactics

Stanley's journal records his impressions of the leader of this formidable war machine, whom he called the 'Black Napoleon', following their meeting in 1876: 'A handsome, regular-featured, mild-voiced, soft-spoken man ... This unassuming, mild-eyed man, of inoffensive, meek exterior, whose action was so calm, without a

gesture, presented to the eye nothing of the Napoleonic genius which he has for five years displayed in the heart of Unyamwezi ... I said there was nothing; but I must except the eyes, which had the steady, calm gaze of a master.'

The basis of Mirambo's strategy was the extraordinary speed at which his armies could assemble and manoeuvre. Until the last few years of his life he led his Ruga-Ruga in person, distinguished by an umbrella which always accompanied him, and invariably setting a punishing pace. As Southon wrote: 'He himself has told me that he would frequently run 15 or 16 miles, capture a village and without stopping for a rest make a rapid march of 30 miles more to another place ... He never allowed anyone to outrun him.' There were few stragglers, as to fall behind meant to miss the fighting, and hence a share in the loot.

Southon went on to explain the effect of this mobility on Mirambo's enemies: 'The celerity of his movements, the sagacity of his plans and the ferocity with which his onslaughts were made, struck terror into the hearts of all the people for many miles around. No one could tell in what district he would appear next: today he was at one place, yet yesterday he was 40 miles south of it.' An example of Mirambo's decisiveness was recorded at the start of the Arab war in the 1870s. The Arabs had invited the Nyamwezi 'Sultan' Mzogera of Uvinza to join them, but before he could even muster his army Mirambo had learned of the plan and overrun his territory. Mzogera had no choice but to contribute his troops to Mirambo's army instead.

Tactically, the preferred method of attack was to make a forced march to the nearest enemy village, using unfrequented routes, the aim being to achieve surprise by arriving at night. About an hour before dawn the Ruga-Ruga would storm the weakest section of the defences, climbing over the palisades and tearing the gates from their hinges. Although Mirambo recognised the value of muskets, and made efforts to obtain as many as possible, most accounts of his battles suggest that a rush to close quarters was his favourite tactic. After a victory, he himself took control of all the loot. He then returned half of it to his defeated enemies and shared out the rest among the bravest of the Ruga-Ruga. The enemy chief was usually executed and replaced with a local puppet ruler, but Southon believed that the conquered tribes-people were actually better off under Mirambo, as he did not impose taxes, but required only recruits for his army. 'On these young men', he says, 'Mirambo bestowed considerable care and attention; he armed them with guns and taught them how to use them; he conspicuously rewarded the brave and the loyal.'

All of the Ruga-Ruga who accompanied Mirambo on his visit to Stanley in 1876 were equipped with guns, but it is not certain that the

entire army possessed them at this date. Stanley's account of the ambush at Wilyankuru mentions only spears, but many warriors are known to have carried both weapons. The warlord preferred to recruit very young men for his army, believing that they were more prepared to risk their lives than the older men with families, who by contrast were steadier in defence. He told Stanley that the unmarried youths 'have sharper eyes ... and a few words will give them the hearts of lions. In all my wars with the Arabs, it was an army of youths that gave me victory, boys without beards. Fifteen of my young men died one day because I said I must have a certain red cloth that was thrown down as a challenge. No, no, give me youths for war in the open field, and men for the stockaded village.'

Apart from the Nyamwezi Ruga-Ruga who constituted the core of his army, Mirambo made use of troops from various other sources. He had a personal bodyguard of armed slaves known as the *waniakuru*, who may have been the same as the 100 uniformed men whom Stanley's scout Mabruki saw in 1876. The governors of strategic frontier districts were drawn from this unit; they were called *m'gahue*, and distinguished by a shell suspended from their necks by a strip of lion skin. For most of Mirambo's reign the Tuta branch of the Ngoni were friendly, and they sent contingents to support him on numerous occasions. However, in 1883 war broke out between him and the Tuta, and he turned instead to the Masai to supply him with allies. Cameron says that some Arabs defected to him during the Arab war, but he did not trust them and had them killed. After the war, however, he granted asylum to Said bin Salim, the deposed governor of Tabora, and even planned to restore him to his position. Mirambo was also on good terms with the Zanzibari slaver Tippu Tib, and when a dispute with the Tuta in 1881 seemed about to lead to war he even negotiated unsuccessfully for support from Zanzibar.

Although his capital was never threatened during his lifetime, Mirambo was also well prepared for defensive warfare. E.C. Hore of the Church Missionary Society described his stronghold at Urambo as a giant fortified *tembe*, 500 paces by 300, with a single door in the middle of each side. According to Southon, the interior courtyard was big enough to contain 200 houses, inhabited by a total of 10,000 people.

NYUNGU-YA-MAWE

The other outstanding leader of Ruga-Ruga was Mirambo's contemporary Nyungu-ya-Mawe. Nyungu is less well known nowadays, mainly because he had fewer peaceful contacts with Europeans, but in his heyday he was in fact the more feared of the

two. He was also a Nyamwezi of royal blood, who according to one source may even have been the head of the ruling family of Unyanyembe, and hence the rightful *ntemi*. Stanley describes him as the ‘brother’ of Manua Sera, and local traditions confirm that Nyungu regarded himself as his heir. His real name is unknown: ‘Nyungu-ya-Mawe’ is another Nyamwezi nom de guerre, meaning ‘pot of stone’ — in other words, unbreakable. His first recorded campaign took place at the same time as Mirambo’s, in 1871, when he was the leader of a band of Ruga-Ruga based at Itetemia near Tabora. Nyungu himself was never seen by a white man, but traditional accounts describe him as small and very dark skinned, with only one eye. As a young man he led his men personally in battle, but in later life he preferred to remain at his base in Kiwele and delegate operations to his subordinates. Many stories depict him as cruel and treacherous. On one occasion, for example, he invited a rival chief into his camp, and persuaded him to sit on a stool which had been placed over a hidden pitfall trap. When the victim fell in, Nyungu ran up and stabbed him to death with a spear.

According to Stanley, who heard about his activities in 1871, Nyungu had been despatched by Mkasiwa, the Arab-backed *ntemi* of Unyanyembe, on an unsuccessful raid against Mirambo’s allies in Ukonongo. On the other hand, Nyamwezi accounts collected during the German colonial period claim that Nyungu was never subject to Mkasiwa, and was at this stage on friendly terms with Mirambo. He certainly seems to have become involved with a faction among the Nyamwezi which was opposed to Arab influence, and by 1875 he had left Unyanyembe and set up an independent base further south, in the country of the Kimbu. He then moved quickly to seize control of the caravan route between Ukimbu and the coast. This ran through a small chiefdom called Kirurumo on the borders of Ugogo, which was inhabited mainly by Kimbu refugees who had fled from a Sango invasion in the 1830s. Nyungu’s Ruga-Ruga occupied Kirurumo, but soon found themselves in trouble when their gunpowder ran out. The situation was saved by the arrival of a caravan led by a relative of Nyungu’s, Ruhamba, who was bringing a large consignment of powder up from the coast. A deal was struck whereby Ruhamba supplied the gunpowder and in return Nyungu installed him as chief of Kirurumo. The two men then went on to carve out a sort of bandit kingdom in Ukimbu, extorting tribute from the local people and robbing the passing caravans.

Nyungu’s main rival in the area was Xapumpa, chief of the town of Kiwele. In their first clash — a fight over the ivory from an elephant which had been killed on the border between their territories — Nyungu was defeated. Shortly afterwards, however, an army under

Sultan Merere of Sangu arrived on the scene. Merere had been temporarily driven out of his country by the Hehe (which places these events around 1875), and joined forces with Nyungu to drive out Xapumpa. A year later Merere returned to his kingdom and Nyungu found himself sole ruler of Kiwele. He began to administer the area under his control on a permanent basis, and for the first time to impose a kind of unity on the Kimbu. However, this was not an entirely beneficial process, for his expansionist wars and attacks on trading caravans impoverished and depopulated many parts of the country. The French White Father missionaries who arrived in Ukimbu in 1878 were shocked to find that the prosperous villages described by Cameron five years earlier no longer existed, and that 'the Wakimbu run away at the slightest threat of war, taking their flocks and families with them'.

Late in 1876 Mkasiwa died, and the Arabs placed his son Isike on the throne of Unyanyembe. Mirambo and Nyungu formed a brief coalition against Isike, in what became known as the 'War of the Bell-Anklets', from the ornaments worn by their Ruga-Ruga. The Arabs drove the two warlords off, but Nyungu returned to the attack two years later in alliance with his old friend Ruhamba. Tabora was now under attack not only from Nyungu but also from the exiled former Arab governor, Said bin Salem, supported by Mirambo. The result was a virtual blockade of the town carried out at long distance, in pursuit of which the allied warlords regularly destroyed caravans bringing up supplies from the coast. Another report from the White Fathers in 1878 described Tabora as surrounded by 'a vast area of desolation'.

This strategy inevitably brought Nyungu into conflict with the explorers and missionaries who were using the trade route in increasing numbers. In August 1878, 60 Ruga-Ruga attacked and robbed the White Fathers' caravan near Lake Chaya, north-west of the Mgunda Mkali wilderness, following which a French explorer, the Abbé Debaize, retaliated by killing some of a group of Nyungu's men. Later in the same year Charles Stokes, working for the Church Missionary Society, complained that the bearers of his last three letters had all been murdered by the Ruga-Ruga. Then in December 400 of them ambushed a party led by William Penrose, a young engineer who was taking a boat engine to Lake Victoria on behalf of the same Society. The caravan was escorted by only six askaris, who were soon either killed or ran away. Penrose himself is said to have made a heroic last stand with his back to a tree, which was riddled with bullets before his gun was shot from his hand and he was overwhelmed. The Ruga-Ruga stripped the skin from his face as a trophy, while Nyungu himself showed his approval of the murder by accepting Penrose's gun and donkey as his share of the loot.

At about this time Nyungu seized control of the strategic village of Mdaburu on the Zanzibar-Tabora road, which was the last resupply point before the difficult and waterless Mgunda Mkali wilderness, and so was an ideal spot to intercept caravans. Meanwhile he had been extending his power in the south and west as far as Ufipa, at the south-eastern corner of Lake Tanganyika. He also seized some territory from his former ally, Merere of the Sangu, while the latter was busy fighting the Hehe, but at the same time he alienated the Hehe by giving asylum to Mwambambe, a defeated claimant to the Hehe throne. During 1878 Nyungu took revenge for his earlier defeat in Ukonongo in a campaign which became a byword for cruelty, and in the following year he fought a war against a chief called Musonga, culminating in the siege of a rock fortress at Ilamba which the Ruga-Ruga reduced by starvation. Then in 1880 Nyungu turned against his most powerful ally. One of Mirambo's sub-ordinates, Mtinginya, was lying in wait for caravans on the route to Tabora when he was attacked and driven off by Nyungu's men.

Nyungu by now had few friends left. His reputation among the Europeans and Arabs was as a 'ferocious highwayman', in contrast to the statesmanlike Mirambo, and everyone who had an interest in the traffic between Tabora and the coast was now aligned against him. The focus of the ensuing war was Mdaburu. Nyungu's Kimbu protégé Mlewa was now chief of the district, but his control was disputed by Mwinyi Mtwana, the commander of the Zanzibari fort which had recently been established there (see p.46). Late in 1880 Mlewa attacked the fort but was defeated, and Mwinyi Mtwana decorated the ramparts with the severed heads of the slain Kimbu warriors.

Nyungu and Mlewa continued to carry out hit-and-run raids in the vicinity of Mduburu, but their hold on the caravan route was permanently broken by this defeat. Towards the end of his career Nyungu made peace with Mkwawa of the Hehe, and even gave him a daughter in marriage. However, he was faced with a number of internal revolts as his health deteriorated, and he appears to have resorted to ever more brutal oppression. In 1884 his former ally Ruhamba told the missionary Copplestone that Nyungu, now 'almost a helpless cripple and almost dumb', was slaughtering his own subjects. The old warlord died in December of the same year, and was succeeded by his daughter Mgalula.

It was a testament to the effectiveness of the administration which Nyungu had set up that the state survived his death for more than ten years. It now covered about 20,000 square miles (51,800 square km) of Ukimbu, and based a thriving economy on trade in cloth and ivory. Mgalula also maintained the efficiency of the army, and in 1893 she beat off an attack on Kiwele by Mkwawa's Hehe.

When the Germans under Tom Prince arrived in 1895 she welcomed them as potential allies against Mkwawa, and so submitted without resistance.

Organisation and tactics

Like Mirambo's, Nyungu's army consisted of professional soldiers, mostly young and unmarried, who shared with the less well organised bandits of the region the title of 'Ruga-Ruga'. They were recruited from various sources, including runaway slaves, deserters from caravans, and prisoners of war, although most were probably of local Nyamwezi or Kimbu origin. No estimate appears to exist of their overall numbers, but they must have been comparable to the forces of rivals like Mirambo, and so probably totalled several thousand. They were organised into companies which varied greatly in size, from about 20 men to as many as 500. Each company was led by an officer called a *mutwale*, and was known by its commander's nom de guerre, of which several picturesque examples are recorded:

~~Spitter~~ Muzid'
~~Buffalo~~ Mbogo
~~Feeder~~ Mbisures'
~~Kadaleka~~ Nsimba
~~Ngikider~~
~~Wearer of lion's skin~~ Vachu'
~~Barf~~ Mankoi men'
~~Pacifier~~
~~Shyauer~~
~~Pdhyer~~
~~Spent~~ sharpened at both ends'
~~Gunpowder~~ maker'
~~Morona~~ the fighter'
~~Morona~~ the slayer'
~~Morona~~ the tyrant'
~~Morona~~ the straight man'

These military officers were entirely separate from the territorial chiefs whom Nyungu left in control of the districts of his empire — a system of divided command which was intended to prevent any subject chief from becoming too powerful. His ally Ruhamba maintained a high degree of independence, however, and in 1891 still had a standing army of 200 men armed with muzzle-loading muskets. During the reign of Nyungu's daughter the system was tested when a *mutwale* named Mwana Cemi tried to acquire the skull of the late chief of Igunda, a district which he had recently conquered. Possession of the skull would have made Mwana Cemi the legitimate civil chief

according to the traditional ritual, and so this was regarded as a threat to the ruler. Mgalula immediately ordered him to be shot.

Discipline within the companies was very strict, and the loyalty of the men to their commanders was encouraged by their youth and lack of family ties. A favourite ploy to demoralise the enemy was to make a tremendous noise with drums and the bells which the Ruga-Ruga often wore around their ankles. They would also carry or wear a piece of red *ngazia* cloth, which symbolised the blood of their enemies. An account of a battle in 1879 against Musonga's followers suggests that a *mutwale* was not necessarily expected to fight at the head of his men, but might have had more of a psychological role: 'Nsikine came and sat on his stone near the steppe of Kantyentye and shouted: "...Men of Wikangulu, you are finished. I, Nsikine, will grind you to powder. I come for Nyungu-ya-Mawe. You are done for. You are finished. You see these *ngazia* cloths? This is your blood!"... The camps of the men of Kiwele encircled the whole village. Again and again they fought. Nsikine sat according to his custom ... Next day at dawn, as the sun came up, he went to his stone there ... He was smoking hemp. "Heyah, heyah! Men of Wikangulu, you are done for. We, men of Nsikine, are sent by our grandfather Nyungu. This is your blood!"

Plunder taken after a victory could only be distributed by Nyungu himself, as a reward for courage. Men were often executed for minor infringements of his orders, the signal for which was the dropping of a piece of cloth. It was said that Nyungu never referred to a soldier as a man until he had distinguished himself by outstanding valour in battle. Until then, recruits were called *mapimpiti*, or 'logs'. (When committing his reserves to battle, he would call out 'Pile on more logs!') Reckless bravery was encouraged by the smoking of hemp, and by the use of a 'war medicine' which was supposed to make men invulnerable.

Most of the Ruga-Ruga were armed with muskets, and, as we have seen, the supply of gunpowder was a vital strategic consideration for Nyungu. In the 1870s, however, a number of his soldiers still lacked firearms, and in 1878 the White Fathers saw Ruga-Ruga carrying bows and spears, either in addition to or as a substitute for guns.

THE NGONI

During the 1830s and 1840s warfare in the southern half of East Africa was transformed by the arrival of the Ngoni, who brought with them many of the military reforms which had been introduced into the southern part of the continent by the Zulu king Shaka at the beginning of the century. The origin of the Ngoni can be traced to an

army of Ndwandwe, northern neighbours of the Zulus, who had been defeated by Shaka's *impis* in the 1820s and driven north into what is now Mozambique. There they founded the Gaza Nguni kingdom, which was later to put up fierce resistance to the Portuguese, while a related group, the Kololo, travelled west to the upper Zambezi valley. But one Ndwandwe chief, Zwangendaba (better known to the native peoples of East Africa as Zongendaba), led his section of the tribe on an even more ambitious march. Moving further north through Mashonaland, they crossed the Zambezi River in November 1835 — a date which can be fixed with precision because it coincided with a solar eclipse.

The Ngoni, as Zwangendaba's men had now come to be known, then split into two groups, advancing northwards along both shores of Lake Nyasa. Their Zulu-inspired battle tactics gave them a crucial advantage over the local tribes, most of whom either fled into mountain refuges, were defeated and incorporated into the Ngoni *impis*, or eventually copied these tactics themselves. Livingstone refers to the terror which, decades later, still gripped the local inhabitants at the mere sight of the Zulu shields. Zwangendaba himself took the western route, and eventually settled on the fertile plateau of Ufipa, east of the southern tip of Lake Tanganyika, whose people were unwarlike, and which was famous for its red cattle. There he presided over a relatively stable kingdom until his death in 1848.

Then his successors quarrelled, and several groups of Ngoni resumed their wanderings. Those who remained in Ufipa were variously known as the Mafiti, Maviti, or Mazitu. A second group retraced their steps southwards and settled in the mountains on the western shore of Lake Nyasa. A third section, commanded by a chief called Zulugama, was known as the Gwangwara or Gwangara. They migrated east towards the Indian Ocean, wreaking havoc among the numerous but peaceful tribes of the Rovuma valley, and inflicting on the region a reign of terror which lasted well into the 1880s. In 1868, and again in the 1880s, they even attacked the important Arab town of Kilwa on the coast. According to Livingstone only the presence of the tsetse fly, which killed their cattle, prevented them from settling permanently on the shores of the Indian Ocean. Near Kilwa, the Gwangwara encountered some of their compatriots who had come up the eastern side of Lake Nyasa, a band called the Maseko. Zulugama's people quickly fell out with them, defeated them in battle, and drove them back south of the Rovuma River.

In 1860 a new wave of Ngoni from Lake Nyasa arrived in the Kilwa hinterland, led by two famous chiefs, Hawai and Tshipeta. The latter was killed by the Hehe around 1878 (see p.78). His successor Shambruma shared his reputation for exceptional cruelty, and led the

Gwangwara in regular campaigns against their neighbours until the late 1890s. Unlike most Ngoni leaders he put up a stubborn resistance to the Germans until finally subdued in 1897.

The fourth division of Zwangendaba's people — the Tuta or Watuta, so called after their chief Ntuta — marched still further to the north, and arrived on the southern shore of Lake Victoria early in the 1850s. According to Richard Burton they were originally invited into the region 'some years' before he published his account in 1860 ('about 30 years ago' says Stanley, writing in 1879), to help the chief of U'ungu against his Sango enemies. Stanley was told that the Sango drove the Tuta off, whereupon the thwarted invaders embarked on an orgy of indiscriminate looting and cattle lifting across the region. They attacked the Arab town of Ujiji, whose inhabitants took refuge on Bangwe Island in Lake Tanganyika, then followed up with unsuccessful raids into Uhha and Burundi. Grant says that they fought and won a single pitched battle with the Watusi from Rwanda, but neither side dared to repeat the experience.

Various bands of Tuta fought a series of small wars with the Arabs of Tabora in the years before 1858, and finally settled into a semi-nomadic way of life in the sparsely populated savannahs between Lakes Tanganyika and Victoria, living on cattle acquired from the Nyamwezi and other tribes, and augmenting them where possible by further raids on villages and passing caravans. According to Grant they often embarked on these raids in armies of thousands, and would besiege a village for months if they were unable to break in at once. Local tribes even had a special drumbeat to warn of the approach of the Tuta, as they did for man-eating lions. The exploring expeditions led by Speke in 1861, and Stanley a decade later, had some hair-raising false alarms concerning the Tuta — 'that terrible wandering race of savages', as Speke calls them — although they were never actually attacked. In 1876 Stanley found that the country east of Lake Tanganyika was entirely ruined by their depredations. He says that the raiders were hated by all their neighbours, and that to the Arabs killing one of them was 'far more necessary than killing a snake'. In practice, however, the Arabs of Tabora occasionally hired the Tuta as mercenaries, as they did in 1861 during the wars against Manua Sera and the Gogo, and groups of Ngoni frequently fought alongside Mirambo's Ruga-Ruga.

Some of Zwangendaba's veterans were still to be found among many of these Ngoni bands well into the 1870s. In 1877 James Stevenson met old men among the Mazitu who 'began to talk about old Zulu-land in a very familiar way'. Other groups, however, retained only a vague tradition that their ancestors had migrated from the south. As well as these 'genuine' Ngoni and their descendants, the

bands now included many local tribesmen who had been captured and assimilated, and others who had voluntarily adopted their dress and style of fighting. In the early 1880s the missionary W.P. Johnson came across settlements inhabited by Yao, Gindo, and other local people, whom the Gwangwara had subdued and forcibly relocated to distant parts of their territory, like 'miniature Babylonian conquerors'. To confuse things further, there were also gangs of entirely bogus 'Ngoni' — bandits who deliberately copied the costume and habits of the invaders in order to trade on their fearsome reputation.

Some long-established peoples and states of local origin — notably the Fipa, Lungu, Bena, and Mahenge, all from what is now southern Tanzania or northern Malawi — were also virtually indistinguishable from the Ngoni in their appearance by the time Europeans first encountered them in the 1870s. Ngoni influence was strong among the Hehe, and it has often been claimed that the Ruga-Ruga also owed much to Ngoni methods of warfare, although this is debatable. The Lungu on the southern shore of Lake Tanganyika adopted Ngoni methods about 1860 under their chief Mulalani, and embarked on a brief but spectacular career of conquest before relapsing into obscurity after Mulalani's death. In many cases, however, the resemblance to the Ngoni was confined to their outward appearance. Joseph Thomson, who visited the Mahenge in 1879, remarks that although they looked like Zulus, they were in fact 'a set of most arrant cowards', and had 'no more affinity to that tribe than a donkey in a lion's skin has to a lion'. Nevertheless, although there were no more than about 4,000 Mahenge altogether they had depopulated an area twice the size of their own country, and their surviving neighbours lived in abject terror of them.

One tribe living on a plateau north of the Rovuma River used an ingenious strategy to escape the attentions of the Gwangwara. The Makonde relied mainly on archery in combat, but were not warlike; they had once tried to demand *hongo* from an Arab caravan, but the Arabs had ignored them and marched through the country anyway, whereupon the tribesmen gave up the idea for good. Their main defence was the notorious 'Makonde bush', which is described by Livingstone and others as an impenetrable jungle of dense thorn bushes, which made travel across the plateau impossible other than by narrow tracks. This bush was not natural, but had begun as a secondary growth in fields left abandoned after the owners had been kidnapped by slavers. The Makonde had soon realised its advantages, however, and by the 1870s they were deliberately allowing it to grow across large areas as a sort of natural fortification. The plateau was also virtually waterless — an inconvenience which the Makonde accepted as part of the price of security. Neither the Gwangwara nor

the Arabs relished fighting in these conditions, so the tribe was able to survive relatively unmolested in the midst of its more powerful enemies. Even the Germans were unable to penetrate the Makonde country until 1899, despite its proximity to the coast.

The Ngoni of Tanganyika came under German control relatively peacefully during the 1890s. Many of them had already fought alongside the Germans and their Sango allies against the Hehe, and the colonial authorities preferred to bring them under their authority by diplomacy rather than risk war with yet another formidable enemy. Those in the south submitted in 1897 to an expedition under Captains Engelhardt and Fuleborn after a number of their chiefs were lured from their chief town of Songea under a flag of truce and arrested. It was not until the Maji Maji Rebellion of 1905 that they made a serious attempt to avenge this treachery. The Tuta were nominally subjugated by Emin Pasha in 1890, but escaped military defeat by avoiding contact with his expedition and continued their customary raids for several more years until they were forcibly settled south of Lake Victoria by a column led by Captain Langheld.

Organisation and tactics

The term *impi* was still commonly used for Ngoni war parties well into the 1890s, and there is evidence that at least some groups retained the Zulu system of organising their warriors into regiments based on age-sets. Burton describes them as using the traditional Zulu tactic of enveloping their enemies with two ‘horns’ extending out from the flanks of the main body. He gives the following account of the organisation and tactics of the Tuta: ‘Their thousands march in four or five extended lines, and attack by attempting to envelop the enemy. There is no shouting or war-cry to distract the attention of the combatants: iron whistles are used for the necessary signals.’ What signals were actually given in battle we are not told, and Burton implies that there was very little in the way of central control or discipline: ‘During the battle the sultan, or chief, whose ensign is a brass stool, sits attended by his forty or fifty elders in the rear; his authority is little more than nominal, the tribe priding itself upon autonomy. The Watuta rarely run away, and take no thought of their killed and wounded.’ Despite Burton’s remark about the Tuta fighting in silence, the German missionary Reusch says that the coastal tribes referred to the Ngoni in general as Walihuhu, ‘after their war-cry “Hu-hu”’.

Burton and Grant both repeat a rumour that the Tuta women fought alongside the men — with bows according to Grant, although Burton states that the tribe never employed missile weapons. It is

worth noting in this connection that neither of these writers ever encountered the Tuta in battle (although Grant saw plenty of their warriors around his campsites), so were heavily reliant on hearsay gleaned from their Arab enemies.

It is generally agreed that the secret of the dramatic success of the Ngoni in East Africa was their introduction of close combat tactics, using the short Zulu *iklwa* or stabbing assegai, into a region where warriors had traditionally thrown their spears from a distance. Perhaps more important than weaponry and tactics, however, was the morale ascendancy which they achieved over most of their opponents, with what F.D. Lugard described as their 'character for invincible courage'. By the second half of the 19th century, though, this may have been more reputation than reality, and numerous accounts suggest that they were actually fairly cautious, preferring ambushes and surprise night attacks to open battle. The conservative Tuta, who never adopted firearms, tended to be very wary of those who had them. Burton claims that they would 'decamp without delay' if they encountered a caravan headed by a red Zanzibari flag, knowing that it would be accompanied by askaris with muskets. It is probably this fear of guns which accounts for the fact that Speke and Stanley both traversed the Tuta country at the height of their depredations without having to fight.

THE SANGO AND THE BENA

The Sango, who were also known as the Rori or Loli, lived along the River Ruaha and in the surrounding hills, south of Ugogo and west of Uhehe. They were closely related to the Hehe but were even more strongly influenced by the Ngoni, who had settled in Ufipa, on their western border, in the 1840s. In fact it seems to have been via the Sango that the Hehe were introduced to Ngoni tactics. Towards the end of the 1840s the Sango fought a disastrous war with the Ngoni, as a result of which many of them became refugees in Usavila, in what was later to become Uhehe. However, they eventually made peace with the Ngoni, who fought as their allies against the Hehe in the 1870s. Even before the arrival of the southerners, the Sango had begun to acquire muskets from the Arabs, and as early as 1830 they were beginning to gain a reputation as caravan robbers.

It was around 1838 that the scattered Sango villages were first organised into a state under their Chief Merere I Mwahavanga, but after Merere died in the 1860s they were once again fragmented by civil war. By 1870 Merere II had succeeded to the chieftdom and reimposed unity, although a rival claimant, Kimalaunga, remained independent south of Lake Rukwa and raided the trade routes with his

private army of Ruga-Ruga. In that year an Indian Muslim from Tabora, Amran Masudi, led his private army of 'Wangwana' in an attempt to conquer Usango. With the aid of a small group of Swahili traders who were resident in his country, Merere defeated the invaders and then went on to extend his power over the neighbouring Bena and other tribes. Then in 1874 he was attacked by Munyigumba of the Hehe, and driven out of his capital. He re-established himself further west, however, and built a stone-walled fort at his new headquarters in the mountains at Utengule Usafwa. According to H.B. Cotterill, at the time of his visit in 1877 'Sultan' Merere, as he now called himself, still ruled over an 'empire' which stretched from the Rufiji River south-westwards as far as Lake Nyasa. Nevertheless, he bore a permanent grudge against the Hehe, and in 1892 he offered the services of the Sango army to the Germans in their war against Mkwawa. In 1896 Merere was restored to his old capital by a German column under Tom Prince.

The Bena were divided into two main groups: the lowlanders, who lived along the Ruaha and its tributaries, and the highland Bena of the mountains. Both groups had adopted the Ngoni military system with such success that they were said to be the only local tribe whom the Gwangwara themselves were afraid to face in battle. W.P. Johnson reports that the Ngoni called the Bena 'Nyaka-nyaka ... a kind of nickname, a name of terror', although he was unable to discover exactly what it meant. The lowlanders had once been ruled by a strong royal dynasty, the Mukinamanga, who were related to the ruling family of the Hehe. During the 1860s they began to expand into the mountains, laying the foundations of a unified Bena state, but before 1875 they were crushed by the Hehe at the Battle of Mugoda Mutitu, after which they lost much of their independence. Many of the Bena were subsequently incorporated into the Sango and Hehe 'empires'. Joseph Thomson, writing in about 1880, describes the Bena as a 'sub-tribe' of the Sango, and 'of a servile character'. During the German campaigns against the Hehe in 1891-98 many of the Bena, led by a chief named Kiwanga, whose father had been dispossessed by the Hehe, fought loyally on the German side.

Like the Bena, the Sango had adopted Ngoni organisation as well as tactics. Their manpower was organised into formal regiments, which are believed to have inspired the better documented Hehe system (see pp.79-80). Some of the Hehe regimental names, such as the Vanamwani, Vatengelamutwa, and Valambo, were copied from the Sango, as was the practice of encouraging the troops before a battle with a formal speech. After a victory, Sango warriors collected the hands of the enemy dead to provide their chiefs with proof of their prowess.

Fortifications were also important in Sango warfare. J.F. Elton, who passed through Usango with Cotterill in 1877, says that Merere's old capital, which had been evacuated and burnt not long before in response to a Hehe invasion, had had 300 gates, and was large enough to keep 10,000 cattle inside the wooden stockade. An illustration in his book shows tall wooden watch-towers around the surviving Sango villages, from which a lookout was kept for raiders. The stone fort at Utengule Usafwa was claimed to be the strongest fortress in the interior of East Africa. Its garrison included some musket-armed Arab and Baluchi traders who were based in the town, as well as the Sango warriors. The Hehe besieged Utengule on at least two occasions but failed to take it, and they later adopted the principle of its construction for their own stronghold at Kalenga.

THE HEHE

The Hehe have long been a subject of controversy among students of African history. During the German colonial period they were regarded as the dominant warrior race of the region, the Zulu-inspired 'Junkers of East Africa', 'a true warrior tribe who live only for war', who at the Rugaro River in 1891 inflicted on the Germans the worst defeat which they ever suffered during the conquest of East Africa. More recently, scholars have struggled to find any trace of a Hehe ethnic identity before the colonial era, and have even implied that the Germans exaggerated the power of their enemies to explain away their defeat at the hands of what had been no more than a temporary coalition of tribes. The truth probably lies about halfway between these two extremes.

The Hehe were certainly known before the colonial period, and they did already have a military reputation. The name 'Hehe' is recorded as early as the 1860s, and is said to be derived from their war cry, '*Hee! Hee! Vatavagu twihoma! Ehee!*' The name probably came into use to describe the confederation of tribes founded in the Iringa Highlands south of the Ruaha River by Munyigumba (1855–79), whose followers had links with the neighbouring Gogo, Sango, and Bena. It was not always clear even to contemporaries who was a Hehe and who was not; for example, the Gogo described one group of villagers along the Ruaha River as Hehe, whereas the Hehe referred to them as Gogo. A 20th-century visitor identified 29 separate tribes which had been incorporated into the Hehe confederation since the 1850s. Even the German anthropologist Nigmann, writing in 1908, admitted that there was no such thing as a 'pure' Hehe. The most important factor in defining the Hehe was allegiance to the ruling family, which took the name of 'Vamuyinga' after its legendary

founder, Muyinga. The peoples who met this qualification came from a variety of farming and cattle-herding tribes, and certainly did not constitute a professional warrior class.

The bleak, infertile highlands could not support their growing population from their own resources, and in the 19th century their inhabitants became known mainly as cattle thieves — an occupation which gave rise to their alternative name of 'Dirigo'. Burton alleges that in the late 1850s the Hehe were afraid of their neighbours the Sango and would not face them in open warfare, but by the mid-1870s this situation had changed. Verney Cameron says of the Hehe he saw in 1873 that 'Such is their reputation for courage and skill in the use of their weapons that none of the tribes on whom they habitually make their raids ever dare to resist them'.

Much of the credit for this transformation appears to be due to Munyigumba, who ironically was himself of Sango origin. Joseph Thomson, who visited Uhehe in 1879, actually says that the Hehe were 'a very insignificant tribe' before Munyigumba began to lead them in war. During the 1860s he rallied most of the small tribes of the highlands under his banner, and subsequently led them to decisive victories over the Sango and the Bena. The latter were driven out of the highlands altogether after the Battle of Mugoda Mutitu, which different authorities date to either 1867 or 1874. Then the newly united Hehe turned against the Sango and forced them to withdraw north-westwards into Ukimbu. The final operations of this war were witnessed by the British explorers Elton and Cotterill in 1877. Munyigumba's last campaign was against a band of Ngoni who had fought alongside the Sango in the previous war, and who now advanced deep into Uhehe before being defeated and turned back at the Battle of Nyamulenge, where the prominent Ngoni chief Tshipeta was killed. Reusch records a tradition that this bloody battle was eventually decided by single combat between Munyigumba and Tshipeta: 'This fight of the two chiefs was so grand that both hosts stopped to watch it in deadly silence, until it was over and Chipeta fell down with the sword of his great enemy in his heart.'

The campaigns of Mkwawa

After this a war of succession broke out between the late king's son, Mkwawa, and his Nyamwezi son-in-law Mwambambe. Mkwawa was at first forced to flee into exile in Ugogo, but returned and drove out his rival. Mwambambe in turn fled, and was given refuge by the Kimbu warlord Nyungu-ya-Mawe. Mkwawa now turned his attention to dealing with another Ngoni incursion. In 1881 he again defeated the invaders, and forced them to agree to a truce until the sons of the

current warriors had come of age. This truce was faithfully observed until the arrival of German rule, which prevented any attempt to resume the war. Meanwhile Mwambambe returned at the head of an army which included many men armed with muskets, presumably supplied by Nyungu. Mkwawa's troops still had very few guns, but they were nevertheless victorious, at a fiercely fought battle at a location not far from Nyamulenge subsequently known as Ilundamatwe, 'the place where many heads are piled up'. Mwambambe and most of his supporters died there, and by 1883 Mkwawa was the unchallenged master of Uhehe.

Some time between 1880 and early 1883 another crucial battle was fought — this time against the Masai from the north, who had attacked the frontier district of Wota on the border of Ugogo. Mkwawa's governor there, Msanbapakafu Mwasamila, intercepted a party of these raiders, who were probably members of the Parakuyo clan which had been defeated and displaced in the Masai civil wars. The invaders were apparently returning home with a large herd of stolen cattle when the Hehe attacked them and drove them into a patch of quicksand, where many of them perished. Another Hehe tradition tells of a battle between the Masai and a Hehe army led by Mkwawa's sister, Mtage. Allegedly both armies were virtually annihilated in the brutal hand-to-hand struggle. It is not clear whether these two accounts refer to the same campaign, but in any case the Masai threat to the northern frontier was effectively ended in 1883.

For the remainder of the decade the Hehe went on to the offensive, regularly sending out raiding parties in all directions. Some neighbouring tribes, such as the Ndamba and many of the Bena, submitted and joined Mkwawa's growing empire. Others, like the Vidunda and Mbunga, took refuge in the mountains whenever Hehe raiders approached. The main caravan route inland from Zanzibar, which ran through Usagara to Ugogo, was another target, and was often almost closed by the combined effects of attacks on caravans and the depopulation of the villages on which they depended for supplies. During this decade numerous European witnesses complained that, between them, Mkwawa, Nyungu-ya-Mawe, and the Masai were making this route virtually impassable. In about 1887, Mkwawa further consolidated his position by moving his capital to a new stone fort in the hills at Kalenga.

The German-Hehe War, 1891–98

In 1890, in the aftermath of the Abushiri War against the coastal Arabs, the new governor of German East Africa, Freiherr von Soden, established forts at Mpwapwa and Kilosa to protect the caravan route.

The Hehe nevertheless continued to attack parties travelling along it, and the German authorities were even afraid that they might extend their raids as far as the coast. They therefore opened peace negotiations, but before these could come to fruition an apparently unplanned military intervention brought the new colonial power into open conflict with Mkwawa. The commander-in-chief of the German 'Protection Force' or *Schutztruppe*, Hauptmann von Zelewski, set out in June 1891 with the aim of pacifying a band of Ngoni and a local Hehe chief called Taramakengwe, who were raiding for slaves — whether in collusion or independently is not clear. Zelewski's force consisted of five companies, each comprising about 90 askaris, plus three field guns and either one or two Maxims. One company, the 8th under Lieutenant Tom Prince, was composed of 'Zulus' from Mozambique; the rest of the African soldiers were Sudanese. There were also about 170 native porters.

The column did not find the Ngoni, who had been warned of its approach, and because of a shortage of supplies in the area Zelewski did not follow them. Instead he turned into a Hehe-controlled district of Usagara and started burning the villages. He then advanced towards the fort at Kalenga, which no German had yet visited but of which they had been informed by the Arabs. It is impossible to be sure of Zelewski's plan at this point. He did not have orders to invade Uhehe, but he had shown himself to be a ruthless devotee of 'scorched earth' tactics in the Abushiri War, and he may have intended to overawe the tribes which had been attacking the caravans with a swift and destructive raid. According to Tom Prince he had been warned that the Hehe were dangerous, but had dismissed the warning on the grounds that they did not have guns.

The Battle of The Rugaro River, 17 August 1891

There are several widely differing accounts of what happened in the ensuing battle, which is perhaps inevitable in view of the fact that none of the German participants in the heaviest fighting survived to tell their story. Lieutenant Prince, with the 8th company, was left to hold the ford over the River Ruaha while Zelewski pressed on towards Kalenga, which was about 15 miles (24 km) further on. The Germans had already shown their warlike intentions by firing on a group of Hehe — who according to one story were part of a peace mission from Mkwawa — and burning some huts at the village of Image. At dawn on 17 August they set out in a long column through an area of dense bush, with Zelewski at the head riding a donkey, and Lieutenant Tettenborn's company bringing up the rear. Some accounts suggest that the Germans were totally unprepared for any opposition, even

though they had already deliberately provoked the Hehe. There appear to have been no scouts deployed. The artillery and the Maxim guns were being carried dismantled on pack animals, and some of the askaris had not even loaded their rifles. Just before 7:00 a.m. they halted to allow stragglers to catch up, then moved on again, advancing towards a hill covered with large rocks and thick vegetation.

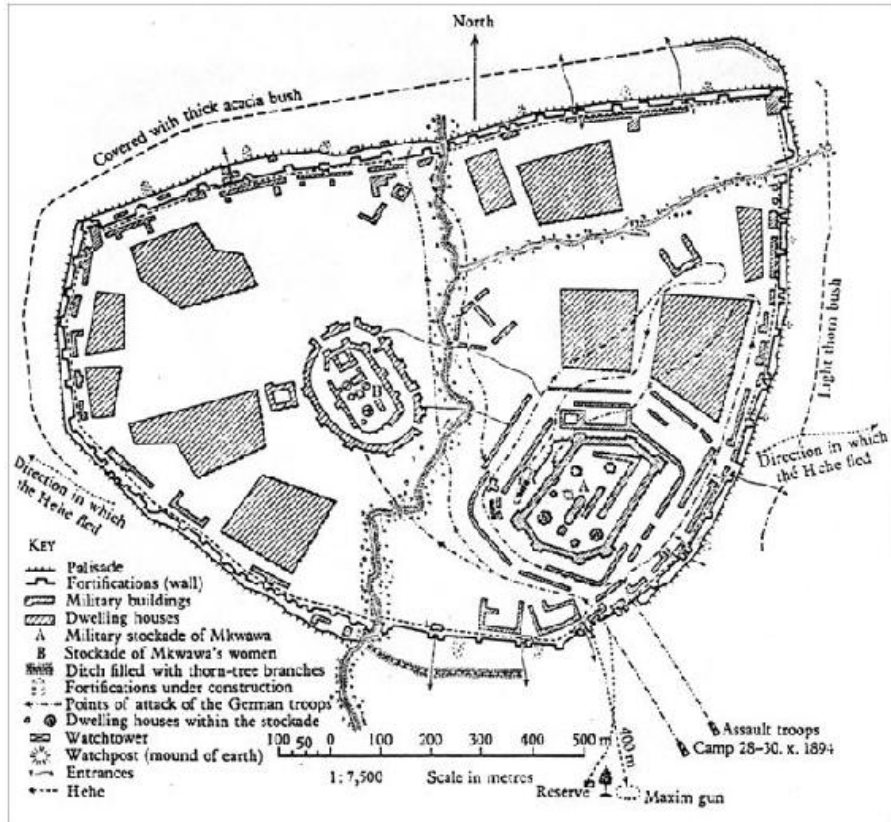
Then a single shot was fired. It is not clear who fired it — some Hehe witnesses said that Zelewski took a snap shot at a bird — but it seems to have either deliberately or accidentally triggered the Hehe ambush. (Another Hehe version says that the signal was supposed to be for their leader to imitate the cry of a bird, but a real bird call caused them to attack prematurely.) Some German accounts speak of a volley of musketry, but it seems better to rely on the recollections of the Hehe themselves, who were the only survivors in this sector of the battlefield. In 1907, a Hehe veteran of the battle stated that ‘the Hehe shot one gun; they all moved quickly and fought with spears.’ Tettenborn and Reichard also imply that only one shot was heard from the Hehe side. Then around 3,000 warriors — commanded by Mkwawa’s brother Mpangile — charged out of the bush, only 30 paces from the head of the German column.

It appears that the leading companies were overwhelmed almost at once, and probably from several directions, because Zelewski was speared in the back as he fired at another group of attackers. His killer was a boy of 16, who received three cows from Mkwawa as a reward. But because the ambush had been launched sooner than intended, those at the rear of the German column were able to organise some resistance. Doctor Buschow and a handful of askaris got one Maxim into action and fought off their assailants from the shelter of a hut until nightfall. Lieutenant Tettenborn, commanding the rearguard, retired to a small hill and formed a defensive position there, which the enemy did not seriously threaten. He waited for two days to collect survivors, then retreated to Mpwapwa, leaving the dead unburied. (One modern writer, noting the differences between Tettenborn’s account and others, suggests that he was not an eyewitness of the battle at all — either his company had been detached before the ambush, or he ran away as soon as the fighting started and later invented a story to justify himself. However, contemporary sources contain no criticism of Tettenborn, and it is quite possible that his own account, which attributes his survival to the premature triggering of the Hehe ambush, is correct.)

According to Rochus Schmidt, the bodies left on the battlefield included ten Europeans (Zelewski, three other officers, and six NCOs), 250 askaris, and around 100 porters. Assuming that the three leading

companies averaged 90 men each, this would mean that they were virtually annihilated. The artillery was also lost. Rochus Schmidt remarks that the dead were among the best men and the most experienced officers of the whole *Schutztruppe*. Many of the casualties had been wounded and had crawled into nearby thickets to hide, only to be burnt to death when the victorious Hehe set fire to the grass. One lieutenant, though wounded, managed to escape and rejoin Tettenborn. The latter claimed that Hehe losses were about 700, but this seems excessive considering that few of the German troops can have had time to fire more than one shot. More realistically, Prince estimated that 60 Hehe had been killed outright, and about another 200 died of their wounds later. Most of these casualties were probably inflicted by Buschow with the Maxim, after the main battle had already been decided. The unreliability of Tettenborn's figures is illustrated by the fact that he listed Mkwawa himself among the dead. In fact Mkwawa was probably not even present, although one of his leading commanders, Ngosingosi, was killed.

The effect of this defeat on the Germans throughout East Africa was far more serious than the mere numbers lost might suggest, but it should be emphasised that it was the only significant defeat inflicted by the Hehe, and was at least partly due to Zelewski's carelessness. At first, however, it left the *Schutztruppe* with no means of retaliating. A hundred and fifty men were sent to protect the loyal population of Usagara, and the Holy Ghost missionaries were asked to act as intermediaries in negotiations with Mkwawa, but no peace agreement was reached. In October 1892 the Hehe destroyed a trading caravan at Mukondoa, and the following year they attacked the ruler of Kiwele, Nyung-ya-mawe's daughter Mgalula, who was allied with the Germans, but they avoided any more direct clashes with German troops. Mkwawa's main strategy was to develop Kalenga into an impregnable stronghold in preparation for the inevitable counter-attack.



A plan of Mkwawa's fortress at Kalenga, drawn by the German governor Freiherr von Schele, who stormed it in October 1894. (After von Schele, 1896)

The fall of Kalenga, October 1894

It appears that despite their offensive success at the Rugaro, Hehe morale was sustained mainly by their confidence in the strength of this fort, which was nicknamed Lipuli, or 'Great Elephant'. It had originally been a simple wooden stockade, but about 1887 Mkwawa had ordered it to be rebuilt in stone. It was probably inspired by Arab fortifications, as the king had at some unknown date sent an officer called Mtaki to the coast to study the buildings there. By 1894 the stone wall surrounding Kalenga was about two miles (3.2 km) long, 8 ft (2.4 m) high, and up to 4 ft (1.2 m) thick. (As usual, accounts differ. Rochus Schmidt, following the immediate post-action report of the German commander, Freiherr von Schele, gives a figure of 4.5 km for the entire perimeter, but the plan in von Schele's report of 1896 shows it as being slightly less than 3 km.) Hehe oral tradition records a song which proclaimed that 'there is nothing which can come in here,

unless perhaps there is something which drops from the heavens'.

This confidence was, of course, totally misplaced. The perimeter was too long for the 3,000-strong garrison to defend properly, and the Germans possessed artillery which had already destroyed stone forts at Itetemia and in several other locations. The Hehe themselves had been unable to take a similar fortification around the Sango capital, but they had no artillery and no experience in siege warfare. Tom Prince, who served with the German expeditionary force, later admitted that if they had made a stand outside the fort the Hehe would probably have won another victory, but Mkwawa would not allow this. To make matters worse, for some reason which is unclear he kept his stock of 300 rifles under his own control, and had only issued 100 of them when the attack came. One Hehe tradition says that Mkwawa had gone mad and told his warriors to load their guns with blank charges, placing all his reliance on magic charms laid on the paths to stop the German advance. The defenders were reinforced by a small contingent of anti-German Nyamwezi, who were armed with guns and were said to be the best shots in the army. They also possessed two Maxim guns captured at the Rugaro, but had no one who knew how to operate them.

Von Schele, leading a German column including three companies of askaris and a number of field guns, arrived outside Kalenga unmolested and built a stockaded camp only 400 m (437 yds) from the walls. For two days his artillery battered the defences. Then on 30 October Tom Prince led a storming party into the fort. The walls themselves were only lightly defended, but four hours of street fighting inside the stronghold followed, with the Hehe shooting from the roofs and doorways of the huts. Von Schele claimed that every house inside the fort had been prepared for defence with loopholes and reinforced walls. One German officer and eight askaris were killed, with three Germans and 29 askaris wounded. According to von Schele's report, 150 Hehe died in the fighting or were burnt inside the huts. When he saw that the battle was lost, Mkwawa apparently tried to blow himself up inside one of the houses, but was led away by his advisors. Among the booty taken by the Germans were the royal stores of gunpowder and ivory.

Nevertheless, Hehe resistance was still not broken. On 6 November, on his return march to Kilosa, von Schele was attacked at Image by a force of 1,500 warriors, who managed to break through the column of porters but were then stopped by the fire of the askaris, leaving behind 25 dead. The German authorities then tried unsuccessfully to open negotiations with Mkwawa, but the Hehe continued to raid those neighbouring tribes who had submitted to the new colonial power. In 1896, therefore, Prince returned to the

Kalenga area and built a fortified station a few miles away, at Iringa. He appointed Mpangile, the victor of the Rugaro, who had recently surrendered to the Germans, as a puppet 'Sultan of Uhehe', but this brief experiment terminated in February 1897, when Prince blamed Mpangile (almost certainly wrongly) for ordering attacks on German patrols, and executed him.

The last two years of the conflict saw the Hehe resort to guerrilla warfare, ambushing German patrols and merchants' caravans and attacking those villages which had already surrendered. Tom Prince took the field with two companies, each consisting of 150 askaris, to fight the enemy with his own methods. Several times they nearly captured Mkwawa, and gradually their scorched earth tactics, together with a famine which struck the region, wore down the enemy's will to fight. During the first half of 1897 more than 2,000 warriors surrendered, but still the others fought on, on several occasions even sacrificing their own lives to cover the escape of their ruler. In June of that year Prince himself was wounded by a thrown spear in an ambush when exploring a cave.

In January 1898 Prince's column surprised Mkwawa's camp, and although the king got away many other Hehe — described by Prince as 'mere skeletons' — were taken prisoner. Soon afterwards Mkwawa organised his last successful operation: an attack on an isolated post at Mtande, in which the 13-man garrison was wiped out. Then in July a patrol under a *Feldwebel* Merkl intercepted Mkwawa's trail near the River Ruaha. Merkl followed it for four days before catching up with his quarry. The king was ill, and few of his followers were still with him, so he committed suicide rather than face capture. With his death, all Hehe resistance immediately ceased.

Organisation and tactics

During his reign Munyigumba established his authority over at least 15 neighbouring chiefdoms, whose rulers either accepted his overlordship or were replaced with royal appointees. The plateau of Wota in Ugogo, which was inhabited by refugees from south of the Ruaha who had settled there early in the century, was also occupied and placed under an appointed governor. This official seems to have had the additional responsibilities of reporting on events along the caravan route from Zanzibar, and of defending the northern frontier against the Masai. All of the subordinate chiefs were known as *vanzagila*, and were responsible for raising their own regiments in time of war. Their districts varied in size, and Mkwawa seems to have allocated his most able and trusted officers to strategic frontier areas like Wota, Isoliwaya on the border with Usango, Uhenga on the edge

of the Bena country, and his most easterly possession, Ulaya, in a region seized from the Sagara. The king himself, or *mutwa*, owed his pre-eminence partly to royal birth, and partly to his role as an intermediary with the spirits of dead chiefs. He was also believed to possess a powerful magic charm, or *amahomelo*, which protected him in battle and assisted him in defeating his enemies. It seems that this charm may have been regarded as an essential part of the king's authority to rule, and his success in war strengthened his legitimacy by proving the effectiveness of the magic. An important item of royal regalia appears to have been a fly switch, and when Mkwawa symbolically threw his away after the defeat at Kalenga the location became known as 'the place where he throws away the kingship'. Mkwawa had a reputation for ruthlessness, and often imposed severe penalties on those who angered or in any way threatened him. At least one able subordinate is said to have been killed on his orders because the king feared that his popularity might be a threat to his own position.

Reliable figures for the total manpower of the Hehe are not available. After the German conquest, it was estimated that their 'nation' numbered about 50,000 people altogether, but this does not include many non-Hehe who had been incorporated into the realms of Munyigumba and Mkwawa, and who sometimes fought in their own styles alongside the Hehe proper. The army fighting in Usango in 1877, for example, included a high proportion of Bena auxiliaries. The king and many of his chiefs maintained small standing armies, which consisted of two categories of warriors: older men known as *vatabmule*, who served as subordinate officers, and the young men in training, or *vigendo*. Munyigumba also introduced the practice of establishing military colonies of young men of between 12 and 20 years of age in the territories of subjugated tribes. These regular soldiers formed the nucleus of permanent named regiments, or *wajinga*, into which all the unmarried men would be enrolled in time of war. Each regiment consisted of the men of a particular age group, and they were not allowed to marry until they had proved themselves in combat. Those who particularly distinguished themselves were rewarded with cloth, slaves, and cattle, while cowards were humiliated by being forced to work as porters. One senior unit, the Vatangelamutwa ('Those who stand firm by their chief'), acted as a royal bodyguard in battle. Regiments were subdivided into companies, known as *fipuka*.

Under Mkwawa food production, supply columns, and medical services were also well organised. German observers described this system as identical to that of the Zulus, but it is not clear whether it was directly inspired by the Zulu example (perhaps transmitted by the

Ngoni, who might have remembered its advantages even after they had ceased to operate the system themselves), or was simply a development of local practice. Some of the Hehe regimental names, such as the Vanamwani, Valambo, and Vatengelumutwa, were identical with those of the Sango, from whom the Hehe warriors are thought to have borrowed the Zulu-style shield and stabbing assegai, so they may also have been the model for this regimental organisation.

Between campaigns the warriors congregated in beer halls, singing and boasting of their exploits. Mkwawa also employed a professional praise singer of Sango origin, who made speeches to inspire the men before a battle. Individual Hehe men adopted praise names or noms de guerre like those of the Ruga-Ruga, usually reflecting their prowess in battle. Names recorded early in the 20th century included:

Mudenyewa-ndembo — ‘Breaker of elephants’

Muhayanga-danda-ya-tangu — ‘Drinker of his enemies’ blood’

Migoha-minifu-giwuya-manyehe-ngan — ‘He goes to war and brings back captives’

Magoha-ga-senga — ‘Fights for cattle’

Munyasala-lyangiko — ‘Owner of a spear as long as a roof beam’

Mugopisala-amandusi-sinagope — ‘He fears the spear, but not the big guns’

Veterans of the war against the Germans described to Nigmann the tactics employed by Mkwawa’s armies. They took the field in both the dry and wet seasons, and often campaigned in several theatres simultaneously. An expedition would be preceded by scouts or *vatandisi*, who might operate several days ahead of the main body. Then came an advance guard, the *vandagandaga*, which might carry out surprise raids or pursue a fleeing enemy on its own, but could be quickly supported by the main body in the event of serious resistance. This main body would consist of one or more regiments, escorting the supply train. Large numbers of prisoners of war, or *vanyawingi*, accompanied the armies as labourers and porters. A commander was not expected to lead the army into battle in person, but remained in the rear with his bodyguard, as the Hehe seem to have believed that the warriors would be demoralised if they saw a chief’s blood spilt (though this had apparently not been the case in Munyigumba’s day, if the story of the fight at Nyamulenge is to be believed). Joseph Thomson pays tribute to the stamina of the warriors, and says that if necessary they could travel at a trot for days without food.

In Mkwawa's day the Hehe generally preferred to advance to close quarters in dense formations, Zulu-style, rather than attempting to skirmish. If musketeers were present they would fire a single volley at close range before charging. However, Elton, in his account of the war against the Sango in 1877, describes much more cautious tactics. The 'Machinga', as he calls the Hehe, besieged a fortified village for several days, trading abuse and long range musketry, advancing only under cover, and even entrenching themselves for protection against the defenders' bullets. Each night they lit fires, apparently to make the Sango think that they had burnt their temporary huts and left. After a few days they really broke off the siege and retired, pursued by the Sango. It may be that it was their relative lack of aptitude for sieges that encouraged the Hehe to rely on their own fortifications against the Germans.

FIGURES

35. ZARAMO WARRIOR This figure is based on sketches by Captain Grant, who accompanied Speke on his march inland from Zanzibar in 1860. Descriptions of the Zaramo are remarkably varied and inconsistent. According to Speke they managed to clothe themselves fairly well from the proceeds of slave-dealing, and another of Grant's illustrations shows a man in an Arab gown and fez, which Burton says was the usual attire of the chiefs. Even in the 1870s, however, many of them were still 'half-naked savages', who wore only cotton loincloths stained yellow with clay. Burton also says that most of the warriors could afford a few ornaments of brass or beads, most commonly a characteristic 'tight collar or cravat, one to one and a half inches broad, of red, yellow, black and white beads'. Both Burton and Speke describe the Zaramo as painting their bodies and dressing their hair into little 'knobs' with 'ochreish clay', presumably of the usual reddish or yellowish colour, while Hutchinson of the Church Missionary Society, writing in the mid-1870s, refers to the warriors' hair as 'hideously thatched with a mixture of black clay and oil'. What appears to be a straw hat — shown in detail 35a — is illustrated by Burton but not mentioned in his written description. It is possible, however, that it is meant to be a depiction of Hutchinson's 'thatched' hair. Both Burton and Speke agree with Grant in describing the majority of the Zaramo as bareheaded. The most popular weapon was the bow, shooting poisoned arrows which Burton claims were carried loose in the hand, although Speke and Hutchinson both mention decorated leather quivers. The latter says that their arrows were smeared with poison, which was bright red when fresh. Spears were also used, and muskets if the warriors could get them, although the

latter did not become widespread until the 1870s.

Stanley's description of the Kwere, Kami, and Doe peoples, who lived in the highlands north-west of Uzaramo, implies that they closely resembled their Zaramo neighbours. The Doe dressed in skins, but like the Zaramo they dyed them yellow. They were distinguished by their scarred faces — 'a line of punctures extending lengthwise on each side of the face' — and their chipped upper incisors. Their weapons were a bow, a club, a small axe, and a couple of light spears, and they carried shields of similar shape to that of Figure 36. Krapf, writing in 1860, reported (though he did not believe) that the Doe had shields 'of such size that five or six men can conceal themselves behind one'.

Fig 35



Fig 36



Fig 37



Fig 38



Fig 39



To judge from Burton's account of his experiences in the 1850s, the Shambaa and Segeju were then dressed and equipped in a very similar fashion. The Shambaa wore a loincloth or a 'rag' over their shoulders, and fought with bows and 'quiverless arrows' carried in the hand. By 1875, however, Charles New found the Shambaa warlord Semboja 'in appearance and dress an Arab ... in great contrast to his poorly-clad brigand-like followers'. The Segeju, a now insignificant but once formidable warrior tribe who had annihilated the cannibal Zimbos as long ago as the 16th century, dressed 'in greasy hides and cotton wrappers', according to Burton: 'Every man carried his bow and arrow, his knobstick, his club, his sword, and his shield'.

36 & 37. SAGARA WARRIORS Another sketch by Grant is the source for Figure 36. Speke described the Sagara as 'spiritless, shy, and timid', at the mercy of every passing looter or slaver, and in consequence very poor. Most of them, he says, were unable to afford even a loincloth, and had to make do with a kilt made of grass, with the odd feather for decoration. Burton, however, describes a goat skin 'apron' tied over one shoulder like that of Figure 45.

Figure 37, dating from ten years later, gives a very different impression of the Sagara. He is based on a drawing by Stanley, together with his description of a group of warriors seen at Mpwapwa in 1871. This man wears his hair in ringlets, and has a band of polished copper coins across his forehead and a necklace of white cowrie shells. Other popular ornaments were small brass chains and earrings, and strings of white, red, and blue beads. The young warriors reddened their faces with ochre, and attached 'tiny bits of brass and copper' to their hair. Burton says that they sometimes added plumes of ostrich or vulture feathers. In all, says Stanley, they represented 'the "beau ideal" of a handsome young African savage'.

This figure is naked apart from a cloak, but Stanley recorded that the chiefs, and most ordinary men in the eastern part of the country, had by his time adopted Swahili dress, and so could not easily be distinguished from their neighbours (and enemies) the Seguhha. Others might wear loincloths like that of Figure 35, made of 'a favourite coloured cloth' called *barsati*. Stanley does not say what colour this was, but Burton mentions indigo cloths, as well as others stained the usual 'dull yellow' with clay.

According to Burton, Sagara warriors were armed with bows, spears, and 'a billhook of peculiar shape — a narrow sharp blade, ending in a right angle and fixed in a wooden handle, with a projection rising above the blade'. This sounds very similar to the Nyamwezi weapon illustrated on p.66; it would not be surprising if a Nyamwezi item had been adopted in Usagara, because the iron for Sagara spearheads was traditionally imported from that people. The typical Sagara shield is also described by Burton, who calls it 'a flimsy article', only useful against 'puny cane arrows'. It was made from elephant, rhinoceros, or giraffe skin if this could be obtained, but more often from much thinner and less effective bull hide. Its size varied from 3–4 ft (0.9–1.2 m) long, and from 1–2 ft (0.3–0.6 m) broad at its widest point. A stout lath ran lengthwise down the inside, and a central bulge was made in the hide so that the lath could be grasped by the hand. Burton gives three different descriptions of shield patterns, which may reflect either regional variations or individual preferences. One bull hide variety had the hair left on in its natural colours, and a zebra or cow tail attached for decoration. Another was painted black and red in perpendicular stripes, as in Figure 36, while the third was divided vertically into two halves, of which one was black and the other red.

Stanley was scathing about Burton's descriptions of the differences between the various tribes of this region. Many of these, he claimed, were 'imperceptible to ordinary men'. At Bagamoyo, he noted, 'we may see Wangindo, Wasawahili, Warori, Wagogo, Wanyamwezi, Waseguhha, and Wasagara; yet it would be a difficult task for any person, at mere sight of their features or dresses, to note the differences.' Stanley goes on: 'Only by certain customs or distinctive marks, such as tattooing, puncturing of the lobes of the ears, ornaments, wearing the hair, etc., which would appear at first too trivial to note, could one discriminate between the various tribal representatives.' Unfortunately such marks were not always noticed or recorded by European observers, although local people seem to have had little difficulty in identifying them. It is quite likely that under Arab influence the tribal differences had become less marked in the 14 years or so since Burton's visit, but it should also be borne in mind

that there had always been contacts and even intermarriage between tribes, which would inevitably blur such differences. Joseph Thomson also points out that, as with more 'civilised' peoples, fashions in beads and clothing varied not only from one tribe to another, but also from year to year. This helps to explain some of the discrepancies between various travellers' descriptions of the same people.

38–40. GOGO WARRIORS The Gogo were a people of very diverse origins, exposed to many different outside influences via the trade routes, and incorporating many slaves whom they had purchased and assimilated over the years. Therefore it is not surprising that they showed a great deal of variation in their appearance. The main source for Figure 38 is a drawing in Rochus Schmidt's *Deutschlands Kolonien*, illustrating a tribesman of the 1890s. However, the Gogo had been extorting tribute in the form of cloth from passing caravans since at least the 1850s, so this style of dress was probably typical of the whole of the second half of the 19th century. Something very similar is depicted in a crude sketch made by Grant in 1860, and at about the same time Burton commented that, being wealthy, the Gogo nearly all possessed cotton garments. This man wears a single length of cloth wrapped around his waist and passed over his left shoulder — a rather extravagant style, feasible only for those who had access to large quantities of material. J.F. Elton writes of 'bright cloths', which could presumably be in any of the colours used in African trade: mainly white, grey, red, blue, or striped. Cameron, however, says the Gogo preferred white cloth dyed 'dirty yellow'.

This figure's spear and bead necklace are taken from Grant's sketch. Stanley says that black and white beads were popular in Ugogo, although no other tribe would accept the former as *hongo*. The Gogo were noted for their pierced and distended ear lobes, which were sometimes stretched far enough to reach their shoulders. In them they wore ivory plugs, small snuff-boxes, or various other useful items. In Cameron's words, 'the ear to a Mgogo answers much the same purpose as a pocket'. The same author describes them as wearing a strip of white cow hide across the brow, and as painting themselves with red earth, either all over or in patches.

Figure 39 is based on a drawing in Stanley's *How I Found Livingstone*. The author describes a war party which his caravan encountered in 1871: 'Feathers of the ostrich and the eagle waved over their fronts, or the mane of the zebra surrounded their heads; their knees and ankles were hung with little bells; joho robes floated behind, from their necks'. The zebra mane headdress was a fashion shared with peoples of southern Tanganyika such as the Sango and the Hehe (see Figures 54 and 55). Stanley's drawing shows only the

insides of their shields, but another, in Cameron's *Across Africa*, provides the shield shape and pattern reproduced here. Cameron says that patterns of this sort were painted in red, yellow, black, and white. There were obviously several other types of shield in use; Grant describes them as 'oblong', while Burton (certainly incorrectly) says that the Gogo had no shields at all!

Fig 40

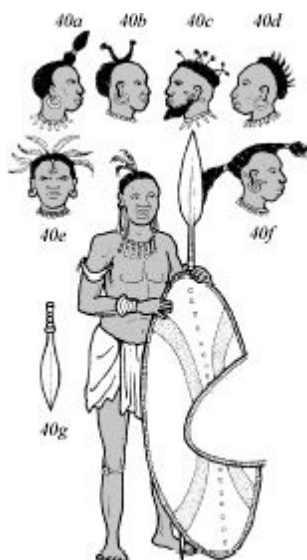


Fig 41

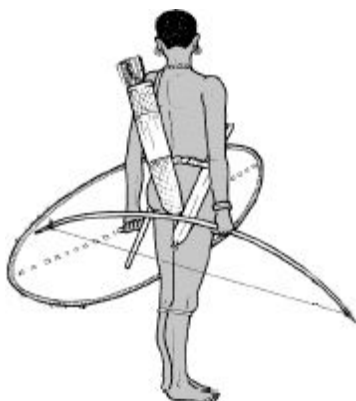


Fig 42



Fig 43



Spears were fairly short: about 5 ft (1.5 m), says Grant. According to Burton (this time confirmed by other evidence — see Figure 40), light spears of Nyamwezi type were used in some areas, and heavy Masai-style stabbing weapons in others. Most of the warriors encountered by Carl Peters carried two of the lighter variety. Bows were also popular, and were often decorated with plates of tin and zinc. Despite their wealth and the easy availability of guns, very few Gogo seem to have acquired them, and as late as 1890 they were still fighting Peters with their traditional spears and bows.

Figure 40 is from a drawing by the French explorer Revoil, who visited Ugogo in the mid-1880s. His shield, spear, and arm ornament show clear Masai influence, as does the ochre body paint which Revoil mentions. The bracelet on his upper arm — also a Masai fashion — is

from the same source as Figure 39's shield. The spear is presumably the 'broad sword-like spear' and 'ponderous man-cleaver' described by Stanley in 1871.

Figure 38's woven hairstyle is one representative of the enormous variety to be seen among the Gogo. Details 40a-d and f show some of the different styles observed by Cameron, who commented that 'it is in the adornment of their heads that the Wagogo principally exercise their inventive powers; and nothing is too absurd or hideous to please them.' Detail 40e, from a sketch by Stanley, shows one of several alternative methods of wearing feathers in the hair. The final detail, 40g, is a knife illustrated by Cameron. A short sword or *simi* like that of Figure 57 might also be carried.

41. NYATURU WARRIOR Few travellers had any direct experience of the Nyaturu, but all accounts describe them as going entirely naked. Speke was told that they despised anyone who wore clothes. Burton says that they used heavy hide shields, *simis*, and long spears, but no bows. The latter statement is clearly contradicted by Stanley's account of his battle with them in 1875, when they fielded many archers, but the rest of Burton's list is what one might expect of a warrior people sandwiched between the Masai and the Gogo, and likely to have been influenced by both. This tentative reconstruction therefore shows a Masai-style shield, like those of Figures 40 and 74. Spears of similar type to those carried by the same two figures are also likely to have been in use. The Nyaturu are said to have revered the zebra as the 'ultimate symbol of beauty'. Therefore — although no eyewitness confirms this — a black and white zebra-stripe motif might be expected to appear frequently, either as a shield pattern or as warpaint. The Masai shield design known as *sirata sambu* (see Figures 76d and r) might therefore be the nearest we can get to the patterns popular among the Nyaturu.

42. WARRIOR OF ROMBO The Rombos were the most isolated branch of the Chaga people, and the least affected by outside influences. It is therefore likely that this figure is more typical of the Chaga as a whole in the early part of the 19th century than the two following figures. This man is based on a photograph taken by Mary French-Sheldon in 1891, combined with detailed drawings of weaponry from the same source. All the men in the photograph are wearing necklaces and these simple cloths tied over the left shoulder, but elsewhere Rombo warriors are described as being completely naked even as late as the 1890s. Ludwig von Hohnel describes the neighbouring Useri as wearing only a 'girdle' of undressed oxhide one or two inches (25–50 mm) wide. If they were given pieces of trade cloth, they wore them trailing from one shoulder, tied round an arm

or leg, or wound around their heads, with 'no consciousness of their nakedness'. It is possible that the men in Mrs French-Sheldon's picture have been specially clothed in order to make an acceptable photograph, rather than because this was their normal attire. Joseph Thomson says that the Chaga often left the hair on their goat skin garments and shaved 'various designs' in it. Other Chaga tribes are known to have worn cloth dyed red with ochre, and it is likely that any clothing that the Rombo did wear would have been patterned or coloured in similar ways.

The shield is made of hippopotamus hide, with designs embossed and pressed into it. Painted patterns are not mentioned. The spear, described by Harry Johnston as 'ill-made', is nevertheless his only fairly up-to-date item of equipment. According to one legend the Chaga had only used spears of sharpened wood until early in the 19th century, when a chief named Nyamungo began to manufacture iron heads based on the Masai pattern. However, other traditions refer to a small-headed iron spear, which was common until the spread of Masai fashions in the 1870s and 1880s. Until then, therefore, Rombo and other Chaga warriors would probably have used a weapon similar to that of their Sagara neighbours (see Figure 36). In fact as late as 1887 von Hohnel says that the Chaga of Useri, another poor district remote from the trade routes, still used small-headed spears because of a shortage of metal. Useri shields were also very small — only about 2 ft (0.6 m) long and 1 ft (0.3 m) broad. Many of the Rombo and Useri warriors also carried bows.

43. CHAGA CHIEF This figure is based on a photograph of Sultan Mireali of Marangu, also taken by Mrs French-Sheldon in 1891. His attire is simply 'an enormous cloth, as large as four table-cloths sewn together, wound around him, and thrown over his shoulders'. Other accounts confirm that, at least by the second half of the century, many Chaga chiefs and prominent men had copied the costume of the Arab or Swahili traders who visited them. In 1884, for example, Johnston found the 'courtiers' of Sultan Mandara in a 'shabby' version of Swahili dress, while a youth from the same photograph as Mireali wears a skull cap with a buttoned shirt and baggy trousers very similar to those of Figure 110. Mandara himself favoured a white skull cap and a long Arab gown, which in one picture is shown as striped.

This figure appears to be typical of Mireali's everyday dress. When he first greeted Mrs French-Sheldon he appeared in the sort of odd collection of European cast-offs which many chiefs had come to regard, rightly or wrongly, as enhancing their prestige with the whites: 'a perfect guy, tricked out in a pair of German military trousers, with side stripes, a white knitted shirt with a brilliant pin on

the bosom, a celluloid high collar, a cravat of the most flaming color, a striped woollen Scotch shooting-coat, a flamboyant pocket handkerchief, and a pair of Russian-leather shoes, exposing blue silk clocked socks. His fine head was disfigured by wearing a black silk pot hat, which was canted backwards, bonnet fashion, by the long porcupine quill ear ornaments thrust through the rims of his ears. He carried an English walking-stick with a huge silver knob, and held in his hands a pair of kid gloves.'

Fig 44



Fig 45

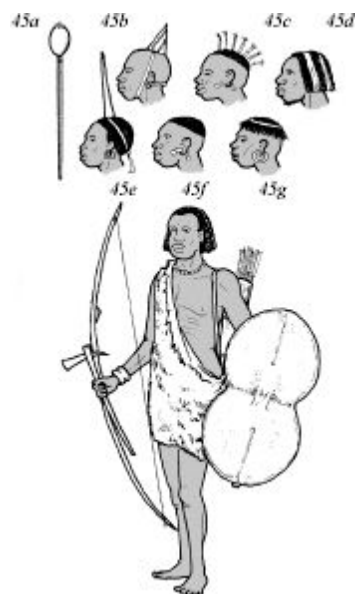


Fig 46



Fig 47



Three years earlier, the explorers Teleki and von Hohnel had visited Mireali and found this flamboyant character wearing an even more elaborate, though slightly less Europeanised, version of this 'gala costume': 'First he donned a long scarlet Arab bernouse completely covered with gold tinsel; over this he put a red general's coat, also plentifully adorned with gold lace, which had somehow found its way from America to Marangu. He then fastened below each knee a Masai ornament, made of colobus skin; on his shoulders he placed a fine collar of vultures' feathers, and on his head a broad-brimmed straw hat trimmed with bright red bendera, and with two long white ostrich feathers. The get up was completed by the winding of some eleven yards of bendera round and round his body.'

It is noteworthy that in this picture the Sultan is carrying a 'new style' Masai spear, with a long narrow blade (see the caption to Figure 74). This is possibly the first pictorial evidence of the appearance of this design, and it is very likely that it actually originated with the Chaga rather than with the Masai. This may be what Hans Meyer, who was exploring Kilimanjaro at around the same time as Mrs French-Sheldon, was referring to when he stated that, in contrast to the broad-bladed spears which had been in fashion in 1887, by the time of his 1891 visit they were 'all narrow and with blunt points'. It may also be the same weapon as the throwing spear with a blade 'as long as the human arm' which was said to have been invented by Sina of Kibosho. The Chaga were famous as metal workers, and actually manufactured weapons for the Masai, so there is nothing implausible in the idea that the new design was transmitted to them by the Chaga, rather than vice versa.

Detail 43a is a cap decorated with red and white beads, of a type worn by most Chaga Sultans, and also illustrated by Mrs French-Sheldon.

44. CHAGA WARRIOR c.1885 The rank and file of Chaga warriors

consciously modelled themselves on the Masai. Harry Johnston, describing his visit in 1884, says of Mandara's men: 'Many were in their war-paint and were dressed to imitate the ... Masai. On their heads would be either a huge circlet of ostrich feathers, or an imposing head-dress made from the black and white mane of the Colobus monkey'. Round their necks were either Masai-style feather ruffs (see Figure 74), or Colobus-fur capes which hung down their backs. Ruffs around the legs — usually made of goat hair — were also worn in imitation of the Masai. The warrior shown here is derived from a sketch by Johnston; he has the Colobus headdress and cape, as well as a spear and shield of Masai type, also described in Johnston's written account. The same source mentions 'masks of ghastly ugliness, with a double face, looking behind and before', but unfortunately gives no further details of their appearance. Ludwig von Hohnel confirms that by the late 1880s Mireali's followers had also adopted Masai fashions, the only difference being that their cloaks or *naiberes*, unlike the white and red ones of the Masai, were made of 'red or other coloured stuffs'. Sina of Kibosho is said to have ordered his warriors to abandon their traditional skins in favour of pieces of red cloth, probably worn tied over the shoulder as in Figure 42. Warpaint consisted of red ochre mixed with sheep fat, which was smeared over the warriors' bodies — another fashion reminiscent of the Masai. Their faces were then decorated with what Johnston calls 'ludicrous designs' in white — most commonly thick white rings around the eyes, or white spots on the cheeks. The Chaga preferred red beads for necklaces and bracelets, and disliked blue ones.

This broad-bladed spear was in widespread use in the late 19th century. It was supposedly introduced to Mount Kilimanjaro by Sina, who issued it to his warriors in the 1870s to replace an older small-headed type. Once again Masai influence is obvious, although the exaggeratedly long metal butt-spike is more reminiscent of the weapon carried by Figure 42 than the Masai version of Figures 74 and 75. Johnston writes of the 'great shovel-bladed spears', which 'inflicted horrible wounds. Here were corpses disembowelled by a lunge and a twist of the spear. Others had their backs literally carved open down the spine'. By contrast, the same writer describes those Chaga warriors who were equipped with guns as 'almost innocuous'. The buffalo-hide shields were also made in Masai fashion. Numerous photographs show Masai-style designs like the one here, although it is not likely that they had the same heraldic significance as they did for their originators, and they may have been randomly chosen by the warriors.

45. NYAMWEZI WARRIOR, EARLY 19TH CENTURY This man wears

traditional dress, based on a sketch made by Grant in 1861. Speke says that while loincloths were worn at home, when travelling or at war men replaced these with a simple goat skin tied over one shoulder, 'exposing at least three-fourths of their body in a rather indecorous manner'. In the 1860s only the wealthy could afford cloth, and most men had to make do with skins. Warriors wore red or pink bead necklaces, and 'massive rings of copper or brass on the wrist'. In 1858 in the Umanda district of Usukuma, Speke saw chiefs wearing 'long red baize mantles, consisting of a strip of cloth four feet by twenty inches, at one end of which they cut a slit to admit the head, and allowed the remainder to hang like a tail behind the back'.

Weapons were bows, spears, *simis*, knobkerries like detail 45a, and light axes. According to Burton, 'their only education is in the use of the bow and arrow ... the men rarely leave the hut without their bows'. Arrows were barbed, but not poisoned. Nyamwezi spears resembled that of Figure 38, and were used mainly for throwing. Burton describes how the spear was held between the thumb and forefinger, and was made to vibrate before being thrown in order to stabilise it in flight. This technique is reminiscent of the Somalis', who achieved the same effect by smacking the spearhead with the palm of the free hand. The small 'figure of eight' shield was made of bull hide, with a vertical wooden rib providing the hand grip, and was painted a plain reddish colour with ochre. Burton says that in practice shields were 'rarely used'.

By the 1860s many of the Nyamwezi had already begun to copy elements of Arab dress, while others adopted some or all of the fashions associated with the Ruga-Ruga (see Figures 48–50). In 1871 Stanley saw many of them in Arab shirts and turbans, although he still described the typical Nyamwezi as 'almost naked'. The Sukuma clung to traditional styles much longer, and those who attacked Stanley in 1889 still fought with bow and spear and dressed in skins, feathers, and 'floating robes' which sound similar to Speke's 'baize mantles'.

Details 45b-g show a selection of Nyamwezi hairstyles, as illustrated by Burton in his *Lake Regions of Central Africa*. As the warriors styled their hair entirely according to personal preference, these imaginative designs do not necessarily reflect the full range of possibilities. There had long been close (though not always friendly) contact between Unyamwezi and Ugogo, and the Gogo styles illustrated in Figure 40 might also have appeared among the Nyamwezi. Speke also refers to warriors 'decked with cock-tail plumes', presumably similar to those worn by Figure 49. An early photograph, taken by Grant at Zanzibar in 1860, shows a group of Nyamwezi with their heads shaved apart from a short 'moon-shaped' patch on the crown. One man wears a zebra-mane head-dress similar

to that of Figure 54, while the rest are bareheaded. All wear long 'waistcloths' similar to the one worn by Figure 22.

46. NYAMWEZI PORTER European and Arab expeditions often recruited Nyamwezi porters, but large trading caravans were also organised by the Nyamwezi themselves. They were free men, often self-employed, and could afford to dress fairly well. Red or white cloth might be worn instead of the skin garment shown here. This man's hairstyle, and his headdress of feathers hanging from a band, are based on a drawing by Burton. Others might wear zebra mane headdresses or fix ostrich or crane feathers in their hair. Small bells were strapped to the legs and ankles, partly as ornaments and partly as an aid to keeping the caravan together.

Nyamwezi porters carried loads on their shoulders rather than on their heads, so even more than the Zanzibaris they hated the white men's square boxes, which were very difficult to carry in this way. However, the missionaries Felkin and Wilson record that they would happily manage a weight of 70 lbs (32 kg), compared to the Zanzibaris' 50 lbs (23 kg). Several of Stanley's drawings show bundles tied up in this framework of sticks. Like the Zanzibaris, porters would usually carry a spear or a musket in addition to their load.

Detail 46a is the head of a *kirangozi* or caravan guide, also illustrated by Burton. It was this man's job to march at the head of the column, and he dressed conspicuously in order to enable the porters to follow him easily in all kinds of terrain. This figure wears a circlet of feathers — which would often be dyed red — stuck into a headband, and a wildcat or monkey skin draped over his head. A length of scarlet cloth with long streamers attached might be tied over his shoulders so that it floated behind him in the breeze. He would generally be followed by a band playing on small drums and blowing antelope horns. Stanley's 1875 expedition was led by 12 such *kirangozi* in crimson robes, the leader of whom carried a long ivory horn, which he blew to warn of danger or to advise the caravan that he had found a camping place.

47. HA WARRIOR This reconstruction is derived mostly from a description by Stanley in his *How I Found Livingstone*. The Ha included a large Bahima element, and this figure shows obvious similarities with his relatives in Karagwe, represented by Figure 71. His head is shaved apart from the characteristic strips or spirals of hair, as depicted in drawings by Burton and Stanley. The latter describes the dress of a chief as consisting of a 'crimson robe', tied in a knot over the left shoulder, and a piece of trade cloth worn as a turban. Although Stanley does not describe the ordinary warriors in detail, he implies that they lacked the turban and that their clothing was of a

different colour. They may therefore have fought bareheaded, and worn either plainer versions of this man's robe, or skin garments like that of Figure 72 (though the Ha had plenty of cloth, which they extorted from passing caravans).

Round his wrists and ankles are solid brass rings, and from his neck hangs a half-moon shaped piece of thin ivory about a foot (0.3 m) in length. Stanley does not specify whether this was suspended only at one end, or, as reconstructed here, at both. His main weapons are his spears; each warrior carried one heavy thrusting spear with a long butt spike, and several lighter throwing weapons. Both types are also illustrated by Stanley. Stanley and Decle, who crossed Uhha 22 years later in 1893, also refer to bows and 'knob-sticks'.

48-50. RUGA-RUGA There are numerous descriptions of Ruga-Ruga, all of which emphasise the diversity of their appearance. Some commentators — perhaps too ready to ascribe every innovation in East African warfare to outside influences — have claimed that the Ruga-Ruga were inspired by the Ngoni, but there is little evidence of this in either fighting styles or costume. If anything, it appears that those who could afford to do so adopted elements of Arab dress, but most continued to fight in their own distinctive attire or 'ghastly finery' (as one Belgian explorer described it).

Figure 48 is wearing a cap made from the skin flayed from a slain enemy's face; among many others, the English missionary worker William Penrose was mutilated in this fashion in 1878. This figure also has a belt made of human entrails, and a necklace of human teeth might be worn around the neck. All of these items were believed to possess magical powers to protect the wearer, and also had the function of inspiring terror in the enemy. He wears his hair in thick plaits, which may have been the origin of the term 'Ruga-Ruga' (originally *valuga-luga*), from their supposed resemblance to a penis (*muluga* in Kinyamwezi). He has ivory bracelets on his wrists; these, along with certain secret scars or tattoos, were originally the marks of elephant hunters, which had come to be associated with the Ruga-Ruga.

Figure 48's weapons are a flintlock musket (known as *gumeh-gumeh*) and a bow. Any combination of musket, bow, and spears was in fact possible. Guns tended to supplant the older weapons entirely from the late 1870s onwards, although as late as 1887 Hermann von Wissmann encountered a gang of '300 savage Ruga-Ruga, armed with spear and bow', led by a Zanzibari deserter named Kahunda. The Ruga-Ruga were notorious for overloading their muskets with powder, which produced an impressive flash and bang, but did little for their accuracy. It was also very wasteful of scarce and expensive

gunpowder. Those defending Wikangulu against Nyungu's army in the 1880s are said to have 'fired charges sufficient to kill a rhinoceros or an elephant. And when two fired together, they cleared a gap in the enemy line, a clear gap.' A popular accessory among some groups was a coil of rope for tying up slaves. A photograph from the 1880s, taken by an official of the African Lakes Company, shows a group of Ruga-Ruga from Ujiji, two of whose members carry drums at their left hips, slung from broad leopard-skin straps over their right shoulders.

Figure 49 wears a cock feather headdress of Ngoni type, as described by the French White Fathers who were attacked by Nyungu's men in 1878. The feathers might be left black, but were probably more often dyed red. Feathers could also be worn stuck into turbans or other headgear, as shown in Figure 50.

Fig 48



Fig 49



Fig 50



Fig 51



Fig 52



Figure 50 is based on illustrations and written descriptions in Stanley's *Through the Dark Continent*, and represents a member of Mirambo's bodyguard. Stanley remarks that the term 'Ruga-Ruga', with its connotations of hooliganism, was not really applicable to the disciplined core of Mirambo's army. This man wears a white shirt under a long coat, which might be either red or blue. Stanley describes three of Mirambo's officers as 'handsomely dressed in fine red and blue cloth coats, and snowy white shirts, with ample turbans around their heads', but it is not clear whether he meant 'red or blue' coats, or whether each garment was patterned in both colours. Mabruki's report to Stanley stated that 'we have beheld the Ruga-Ruga, and there are many of them ... About a hundred are clothed in crimson cloth and white shirts'. These descriptions do not quite amount to evidence for a uniform, but it is obvious that a section of Mirambo's army was distinguishable from other Ruga-Ruga by its fine dress, and that the predominant coat colours were red, and to a lesser extent blue. Turban colours are not given, but — assuming that they followed Arab fashion — they were probably mostly white, or blue-and-white checked.

The followers of Mirambo's rival Nyungu-ya-Mawe do not seem to have adopted these Arab styles, and even after his death in 1884 they continued to fight in their traditional dress. Detail 50b is a shield of the Kimbu tribe, from which most of Nyungu's Ruga-Ruga originated. It is simply a piece of hide on a wooden frame, and was usually painted plain white. Ruga-Ruga did not generally carry shields — partly because they needed both hands to use their bows or guns, but partly no doubt because of the reliance they placed on protective magic. Those shields that were used, however, would probably have resembled either this design, the figure-of-eight style carried by Figure 45, or possibly Ngoni types like those of Figures 52 and 53.

Detail 50a is wearing a *ngazia*, which was simply a piece of

bright red cloth tied around the head, but which had an important symbolic role in Ruga-Ruga warfare. A warrior would taunt his opponents in battle by pointing to the cloth and shouting ‘This is your blood!’ It could have been worn on its own, or combined with any of the other types of Ruga-Ruga headgear. The symbolic red cloth could also be worn as a cloak or loincloth, and may have been the closest that the rank-and-file Ruga-Ruga came to a uniform. Each of Kahunda’s 300 men in 1887, for example, had ‘ornaments of plumes and a scarlet cloak’.

51. MIRAMBO Mabruki and Kacheche, who reported on Mirambo’s Ruga-Ruga for Stanley in 1876, also gave a description of their leader, ‘a very nice man, well dressed ... He wears the turban, fez, and cloth coat of an Arab, and carries a scimitar. He also wears slippers, and his clothes under his coat are very white’. At that time Mirambo wore a beard, and must have closely resembled an Arab Sheikh. This figure, however, from a portrait in Becker’s *La Vie en Afrique*, shows him as he appeared in the early 1880s, towards the end of his life. He still has the Arab scimitar, but the turban and the beard have gone, his hair is unkempt, and he is wearing what appears to be just a single length of cloth, leaving the right shoulder bare in native style. It is unlikely that this reflects a deliberate move away from Arab costume at a time when it was becoming even more closely associated with high social status, and it is possible that the picture shows a more practical outfit which the ‘Black Napoleon’ wore on campaign. He was famous for his ability to run for many miles at the head of his army, and may have found Arab dress too heavy and restrictive for this. In the 1890s Lionel Declé was shown a necklace of 84 human teeth which had once belonged to Mirambo; it was claimed that each tooth represented an enemy whom he had personally killed.

52 & 53. NGONI WARRIORS All of the various Ngoni groups could include — as well as genuine Ngoni descended from Zwangendaba’s *impis* — assimilated local tribesmen and others who had adopted their dress and style of fighting. For example, a report to the Royal Geographical Society by the Reverend Maples in 1881 draws a distinction between the Maviti of Lake Nyasa, who he says were ‘true’ Ngoni, and the Maviti of the lower Rovuma valley, who were ‘really refugee Gindos who live by plunder’, and who had deliberately copied the costume and habits of the Zulus in order to trade on their reputation. Some indigenous peoples — notably the Fipa, Lungu, Bena, and Mahenge — were virtually indistinguishable from the Ngoni in their appearance. These figures, therefore, may be taken as representative of all of these disparate groups.

Figure 52 is based on a photograph of an ‘Angoni’ from

Nyasaland in Harry Johnston's *British Central Africa* of 1897. It shows that the traditional costume, including many elements of Zulu derivation, was still in use at that time. His headdress of black cock's feathers was the commonest distinguishing feature of the Ngoni north of the Zambezi, although Johnston says that a 'circlet made of zebra mane' was a popular alternative. This zebra mane headdress was, in fact, widespread throughout the southern part of Tanganyika, especially among the Sango (see Figure 54), although it is not clear whether the Ngoni immigrants adopted it from the local tribes, or vice versa. Married men are sometimes mentioned wearing the Zulu-style headring, but this was apparently unusual after Zwangendaba's generation. W.P. Johnson, who visited the Gwangwara in 1883, found only 'a few old men' still wearing this headdress. The strips hanging from this man's neck and waist are cut from the skin of a leopard or a similarly spotted serval cat. According to Joseph Thomson the Mahenge often substituted strips of monkey skin, plaited to look like cats' tails. Harry Johnston also describes 'a huge kilt of animals' tails or of dressed cat skins', and adds that a strip of red cloth was commonly worn tied around the waist.

His shield is mainly black, with small patches of white. The Ngoni retained the Zulu practice of keeping the original pattern of the bull hide from which the shields were made, but there seems to be no evidence from East Africa that regiments were still distinguished by different shield colours or patterns. One photograph shows a large group of warriors carrying shields which vary in colour from entirely black, to almost completely white with a few scattered dark spots. In fact the assimilation of large numbers of local recruits, and the relative poverty in cattle and other resources of the Ngoni bands north of the Zambezi, probably made the maintenance of any kind of formal regimental distinctions impossible.

Both stabbing and throwing spears were carried. The one shown here has a small blade and a feather plume on the end of the shaft and resembles the Zulu *isijula*, which was designed for throwing. Johnston, however, describes a drawing of a similar weapon as a 'stabbing spear'. The large-bladed stabbing assegai derived from the Zulu *iklwa*, as carried by Figures 55 and 57, was also still in use.

Fig 53



Fig 54



Fig 55

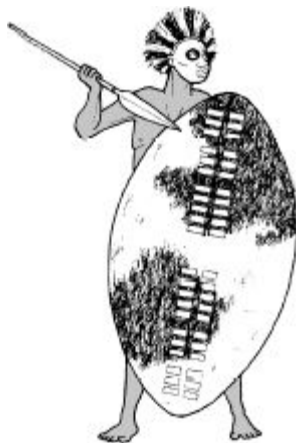


Fig 56



Fig 57



Figure 53 is a reconstruction of a warrior from the first phase of Ngoni expansion, during the 1830s or 1840s. There are no eyewitness accounts from East Africa dating from these decades, but most later observers agree that the Ngoni very closely resembled the Matabele. The basis for this figure is therefore an illustration of a warrior by William Cornwallis Harris, who visited Matabeleland in 1836, at the time that the Ngoni were advancing north across the Zambezi. He wears frills of white Colobus monkey or goat hair around his arms and legs, exactly as described by Johnston 60 years later. His headdress and bead necklace, however, are derived from a drawing of a Tuta warrior in Stanley's *Through the Dark Continent*, which shows a less densely packed arrangement of cock feathers than that worn by Figure 52. The ruff around his neck could be made from white goat hair, as in the original; black cock feathers; or spotted cat skins. Around his waist is a short kilt made of white feathers barred with black.

Joseph Thomson, writing in 1880, describes the Mahenge as wearing 'huge heaps of feathers on their heads, with a long tail of the same hanging down their backs', although unfortunately this feather 'tail' is not illustrated. He says that these Mahenge were 'dressed and armed in complete Zulu fashion', wearing only a loincloth 'of the narrowest dimensions, brought up over a cord round the waist before and behind'. This would presumably have hung down at front and back in a similar fashion to Figure 52's cat-skin version. A garment of this type was common in the south of Tanganyika, and was made of coarse bark-cloth. It was naturally brown in colour, though Livingstone saw the inhabitants of the Rovuma valley wearing black and white striped loincloths. In another passage Thomson says that the Mahenge did not wear cloth when going to war, as they regarded

it as effeminate. He describes the members of one war party as 'all naked, with the exception of a few who had some wild-cat skins placed indifferently on their backs and sides'. Although he tells us that their armament consisted of 'a spear, two assegais, a club, and an oval or elliptically-shaped shield of bullock's hide which they carried over their heads', they must also have possessed some guns, since one of their chiefs demanded two barrels of gunpowder from Thomson as *hongo*.

The Bena, close allies of the Sango, are also described as 'very Zulu-like in their war-dress'. J.F. Elton, who saw them in the 1870s, mentions their 'shell necklaces and hair head-dresses'; he gives no details of the appearance of the latter, but it seems likely that at least some of them would have adopted the zebra-mane headgear of their Sango neighbours (see Figure 54). In 1884 W.P. Johnson described Bena warriors wearing black and white war paint. As Elton sometimes mistook the Bena he encountered for Ruga-Ruga or Hehe musketeers, it seems certain that some of them also carried firearms.

The Tuta, living in the region between Lakes Tanganyika and Victoria, were at the same time the most conservative of the descendants of Zwangendaba's invaders and the most diluted by local influences. They were equipped in a similar fashion to their southern relatives, but appear to have been in general less showily dressed. According to Burton, Tuta warriors carried 'large' shields, and two stabbing spears each, but unlike other Ngoni they never used throwing weapons of any kind. Some of them, he says, wore loincloths made of bark cloth. We are not told what form these took, but it is reasonable to assume that they would be similar to the narrow strips brought up over a waist cord described by Thomson for the Mahenge. Other Tuta were often entirely naked. The cock's feather headdress, as worn by Figure 53. seems to have been virtually universal among these northern Ngoni; it was also popular among the Nyamwezi Ruga-Ruga with whom they sometimes fought as allies (see Figure 49), and this is one instance where Ngoni influence on the Ruga-Ruga seems to have been significant.

54. SANGO WARRIOR This figure is based on a drawing of a Sango chief made by Elton, who visited the area in 1877. His wraparound loincloth is probably made of white or grey trade cloth. Elton says that only great chiefs were permitted to wear brightly coloured cloths or blankets, although everyone who could acquire them decked themselves in 'pounds' of small light and dark blue beads. The enormous necklace shown here is based on the same illustration.

Sango warriors painted their faces white with clay. Headdresses were often circlets made from the manes and tails of zebras; the one

worn by this figure is from the same source as Figure 55 — a drawing made in the 1880s by the French traveller Revoil. Feather headdresses were also common among the Sango, and Elton's companion Cotterill describes a chief wearing 'a huge head-dress of black plumes'. It is reasonable to assume that, like many other tribes in this area, the Sango had copied this and other items of dress from the Ngoni.

Another drawing in Elton's book shows Sango shields, which were shaped like those of the Ngoni, with two rows of vertical stitching, but only about 2 ft (0.6 m) long. They were invariably plain white. The spear was the traditional weapon, and Cotterill refers to brigands known as 'Makauka', whom he met in Usango, as 'armed with great bundles of spears'. By the late 1870s muskets, which had begun to displace the traditional weapons as early as the 1830s, had become commonplace.

Detail 54a is the head of a Sango chief, in this case 'Sultan' Merere, as shown in Elton's original drawing. His hair is worked into small balls and surmounted by a plume of feathers. Otherwise, his dress would have been the same as that of the ordinary warriors, as shown in the main figure. Another illustration in Elton's book shows flags flying over the stockade surrounding Merere's capital. These appear to be plain white, but no further details are given.

55. HEHE WARRIOR, MID-19TH CENTURY The 29 or so tribes which were united in the 1870s under the name of 'Hehe' had various traditions of dress and equipment, the persistence of which gave rise to numerous contradictory accounts of the appearance of Hehe warriors. Richard Burton specifically states that the 'Wa-dirigo' or proto-Hehe of the 1850s looked like the Gogo, including the enlarged ear-lobes, and distinguished themselves only by the removal of their lower incisors, and by 'two cicatrised incisions on both cheeks', although later German sources deny that the Hehe practised scarring. Burton may be referring to the groups living on the northern border of Uhehe, along the River Ruaha, whom the Hehe themselves called 'Gogo'. It is clear that in this area there was considerable blurring of the distinction between the two peoples, but this was also true of the rest of Uhehe, where influences from the Sangu, Bena, and Ngoni mixed with local traditions.

Figure 55 is based on a drawing by Revoil, who visited the region in the 1880s. His headdress is apparently of the same type as that of Figure 54; it is depicted in the original as being a single dark colour, but has been reconstructed here as the usual striped zebra mane. His face is painted white, with a ring of a darker colour around the right eye only. In the original he appears to be wearing a sort of short bark-cloth skirt, but this was not typical of Hehe costume.

Cameron describes a group of Hehe he met at Mwapwa in 1873 — ‘a tall, manly race’ — as wearing ‘very little clothing’, many being entirely naked apart from the occasional string of beads around their necks or wrists. This description is confirmed by Thomson, who says that the Hehe, like the Sango, often wore ‘pounds’ of blue beads around their necks.

Hehe shields were similar in shape to those of the Ngoni, from whom they are thought to have been originally copied, but varied widely in size. The warriors seen by Cameron carried huge bull hide shields, up to 5 ft (1.5 m) high by 3 ft (0.9 m) wide, with a piece of wood running down the centre as a stiffener and curved outwards in the middle to act as a handgrip. In some illustrations this wooden rib extends beyond the top and bottom of the shield like those of the Ngoni, but in others it is not visible from the front. Two brackets for holding spears were attached inside the shield, on the right side of the grip. The face of the shield in Revoil’s illustration is plain, though other sources show that the pattern of the original bull hide was often retained, as it was among the Ngoni. It seems that at least in Mkwawa’s day units could be distinguished by the colours or patterns on their shields, and Magdalene Prince records that at least one of the Hehe regiments in the war against the Germans in the 1890s carried plain white shields.

According to Cameron and Thomson, each man was equipped with a heavy spear for use as a thrusting weapon at close quarters, and between six and eight lighter throwing spears or ‘assagais’. The latter are described as ‘beautifully finished’, decorated with brass wire and with a small brass knob on the butt end as a counterweight. Cameron claims that these spears could be thrown accurately upwards of 50 yds (46 m). The thrusting spear, as wielded by this figure, was similar to the Zulu type, with a short haft and a long head. Burton describes the spears as being long and small-bladed like those of the Sagara (see Figures 36 and 37), which is not confirmed by later observers, but may have been true of some of the Gogo-influenced northern elements, and perhaps more generally in the early part of the century.

Thomson says that instead of clubs or other sidearms, the Hehe carried ‘a hybrid article, between a billhook and an axe’. He does not elaborate on this description, but it may have resembled the Nyamwezi weapon illustrated on p.66. However, a sword or *simi* like that carried by Figure 57, with the blade protruding halfway out of the short scabbard, was a traditional Hehe weapon already in use in the 1850s, when it was mentioned by Burton. He describes it as ‘from one to two feet long, broadening out from the haft, and rounded off to a blunt point at the end’.

56. HEHE CHIEF Eminent Hehe wore a voluminous toga-like garment, the *mugolole*, as illustrated by this figure. This was basically a length of cotton cloth — as much as the wearer could afford — wound several times around the body, and could be very bulky. Thomson refers to ‘forty yards of cotton in a single piece’, and elsewhere to 12 yds (11 m) of cloth, ‘thrown on anyhow’. Nigmann, writing in 1908, describes them as typically about 10 m (10.9 yds) in length. Mkwawa sometimes gave such *mugolole* to his warriors as a reward for performance in battle, but they were not a formal sign of military rank, and in fact were also worn by women.

As they were just pieces of unaltered trade cloth, usually imported via the Arabs, these garments might be in almost any colour. White and blue were by far the most popular, but other possibilities were red, and unbleached ‘Amerikani’, which was a shade of greyish white. Stripes of contrasting colours are also possible. In the 20th century they were often decorated with tassels of red and black wool, but 19th-century observers do not mention this, so it may have been a fashion copied in the colonial period from the Arabs. By the 1890s rich men were also beginning to adopt Arab-style beards and turbans, which, combined with the white robes, gave some travellers the false impression that they were Muslims.

The Hehe possessed at least some guns from the 1870s onwards, and Elton describes them skirmishing with muskets against the Sango in 1877. However, they seem always to have been in short supply, and were mostly hoarded by the chiefs, who distributed them when required to favoured followers. In a group of warriors encountered by Tettenborn in the early 1890s a minority carried muskets, while the rest had only spears. At the Rugaro ambush in 1891, only one gun was fired — presumably by a chief — as a signal for the attack, which was carried out entirely with spears. Several hundred German rifles were captured in that battle, but it is not clear how many of them were used against their former owners. Mkwawa appears to have collected most of them in his fort at Kalenga, where they were recaptured after its fall in 1894. Magdalene Prince refers to others being returned to the Germans in 1896. Mkwawa himself owned a German army revolver, presumably captured at the Rugaro, with which he committed suicide in 1898. After his death he was also found in possession of an old carbine, ‘considerably cracked at the muzzle’, and a half-filled cartridge belt.

57. HEHE WARRIOR 1890s This figure is a composite based on German illustrations of the 1890s, which show a very wide variety of headgear. That worn by the main figure consists of a plume of cock’s feathers, surrounded by a ring of pompoms in alternate light and dark

colours. Other warriors in the same source wear Ngoni-style headdresses like those of Figures 52 and 53, as well as those shown in details 57a and b. Detail 57a is apparently made of plaits of hair bound up with strips of cloth, while 57b is either a lion's mane or — more likely — an imitation mane made from the skin of a monkey or some other animal.

The animal skin loincloth appears to have become almost universal by this time, and was even worn underneath the *mugolole*. In some illustrations it appears to consist of a single piece in the form of a short kilt extending half way down the thigh, while in other cases it looks like an arrangement of small strips hanging from a belt — either as shown here, or extending all the way around the waist.

The throwing spear no longer appears in battle accounts of the war against the Germans and may have largely gone out of use by this time, but broad-bladed weapons like those of Figures 38 and 40 were still widely used. This man's stabbing spear, from an example illustrated by Nigmann, is basically the same as that drawn by Revoil 20 years earlier. Photographs from the German colonial period confirm that very large shields like that of Figure 55 — some as tall as the bearer — were also still in use alongside smaller versions.

THE LAKE KINGDOMS

BUGANDA

In the 19th century Buganda was by far the most populous and powerful of the cluster of centralised kingdoms which dominated the territory between Lakes Albert, Victoria, and Tanganyika. The existence of this well organised and relatively 'civilised' nation, with its strict social order and complex system of government, in a region so remote from outside influences, seemed anomalous to contemporary Europeans, who were always reluctant to believe that Africans were capable of developing such things on their own. J.H. Speke, who in 1862 became the first white man to visit Buganda, thought that their civilisation must have been brought from Abyssinia by the migrating Bahima. Local traditions made no mention of an Abyssinian origin, but the royal families of Buganda and Bunyoro did have a curious tradition that their distant ancestors had been white men. In fact the Central Lakes region had been home to similar home-grown kingdoms since at least the 14th century, and local mythology suggests that the states of Buganda, Bunyoro, Ankole, and Rwanda were merely the successors of an even more extensive empire, that of the Bachwezi.

Buganda was affected by several waves of immigration between the 13th and 16th centuries, which may have given rise to some of the numerous clans into which 19th-century Baganda society was divided. It is not surprising that immigrants had been attracted to the country, which was famous for the fertility of its soil and climate and for the dense populations which its banana groves and well-watered pastures could sustain. The size of the population in the pre-colonial period is impossible to establish, but it was certainly very large by African standards. Numerous travellers remarked on the astonishing contrast between the sparsely settled steppe and savannah of the surrounding regions, and the intensively farmed landscape of Buganda and its satellite countries. Speke compared it favourably with Bengal for its 'beauty and richness'. Stanley, writing in 1879, estimated its total population at 2,775,000, although, as he includes several nominally subject but in fact independent territories like Bunyoro, this should probably be reduced by at least half a million. Harry Johnston claims that an original population of four million had been reduced by 1901 to about one million due to the effects of smallpox, sleeping sickness, and civil war, but the earlier figure is only a guess, and may be exaggerated.



Traditional Baganda war gear, drawn by Grant in 1862. The numbers identify the individual details as: 1) 'the salute of the Waganda'; 2) ivory leg ornaments; 3) King's leg ornaments; 4) men's wreaths; 5) head ornaments; 6) shield; 7 & 8) necklaces; 9) King's bead amulet; 10) necklaces; 11) woman's knife; 12-14) charms; 15) spears; and 16) snakeskin anklet with wooden bolt. (J.H. Speke, *Journal of the Discovery of the Source of the Nile*, 1863)

The wars of Kamanya and Suna

Because of the country's unusual degree of political sophistication and the extent of its operations, the military history of Buganda during the 19th century is not easily summarised. Our knowledge of the wars of the first half of the century is derived from oral tradition and a few sketchy accounts given to early explorers, but it is possible to reconstruct these events at least in general outline. The period between about 1600 and 1840 saw the Baganda empire at its most expansionist. During this time the Sese Islands of Lake Victoria were conquered, the province of Buddu was seized from Bunyoro, and, most significantly, the country of Busoga on the eastern frontier was incorporated into the kingdom. At the same time Buganda's northern rival, Bunyoro, was declining from its earlier position of regional pre-eminence.

During the reign of King Kamanya (i.e., some time in the first quarter of the 19th century) the kings of Bunyoro made a last attempt to reduce Buganda to subjection, and invaded the province of Bulondoganyi in support of a pretender to the throne, a prince called Kakungulu. Allegedly the invaders caused havoc in Bulondoganyi, and the local population was almost exterminated before Kamanya sent his officer Setuba to intervene. Setuba decisively defeated the Banyoro, drove them out of the country, and went on to occupy their border province of Buwekula. Setuba, along with Namujurilwa and Kasindula, became one of the leading commanders under Kamanya's successor, Suna II, who came to the throne in about 1825. Known as 'the cruel', Suna subjected his own people to a systematic reign of terror as well as continually despatching military expeditions against his neighbours.

By Suna's time the main objective of Baganda warfare had ceased to be territorial expansion, and campaigns were undertaken mainly for plunder and slaves, to secure control of trade routes, or to remind recalcitrant vassals of their obligation to pay tribute. The last major territorial acquisition was Busoga, which had been intermittently subject to the Baganda kings for perhaps a century or so but was only finally brought under control around 1840, after inflicting a series of defeats on the armies of both Kamanya and Suna. Stanley was told that the final Busoga war was not ordered by Suna, but was provoked by the ambitious Kasindula on his own initiative. He led a series of secret night raids against the enemy, which created widespread terror, and returned home with 7,000 captives and 5,000 head of livestock, which he presented to the king.

Suna and his *Katikiro* (or prime minister), Kayira, then proceeded to finish the job with a massive invasion, with the land army supported by a fleet of canoes on Lake Victoria. The Baganda

won the decisive battle on land, but the Basoga chiefs trounced the invading fleet and retreated to Kitenteh Island, where they successfully resisted Suna's frontal attacks. They were eventually persuaded to surrender by a blockade and a promised amnesty, whereupon most of them were treacherously massacred.

Busoga was an extremely rich country, and its incorporation into Suna's empire confirmed Buganda's dominant position in the region. Plundering expeditions were now sent out against everyone within reach, and the Baganda armies ranged as far as Rwanda in the southwest, Unyamwezi to the south-east of Lake Victoria, and Busongora on the edge of the Congo rainforest. Setuba was again despatched to ravage Bunyoro, while other armies gave support to a succession of pretenders to the throne of neighbouring Karagwe, and effectively reduced that country to vassalage. In 1857 Suna died of smallpox, contracted while on campaign in Busongora. Prime Minister Kayira took on the role of kingmaker, and placed the young Prince Mukavya on the throne. Mukavya adopted the throne-name of Mtesa, meaning 'giver of good counsel', and it was by this name that he became known to the outside world.

The reign of Mtesa

The first non-African known to have reached Buganda was a Baluchi merchant, Isa bin Hussein, who took refuge there in about 1849 after fleeing from his creditors in Unyamwezi. He gained the favour of King Suna, and convinced him of the benefits of trade with the Arabs. The first properly equipped Arab trader, Sheikh Snay bin Amir, arrived soon afterwards. However, the Arabs had as yet had little influence on the kingdom when the first Europeans appeared. J.H. Speke arrived at Mtesa's court by way of Karagwe in 1862, on his epic expedition in search of the source of the Nile. He found that the nearest Arab trading post was still as far away as the borders of Karagwe, but Mtesa had so far seen just enough of the products of the outside world to convince him of the value of friendship with the whites. Speke's visit was to set the pattern for British-Baganda relations for the rest of the century, for both he and his guns made an extremely favourable impression on the king. Although it was more than ten years before another explorer reached the kingdom, Mtesa never wavered in his policy of encouraging contact with Europeans.

In part this was possible because Buganda had little to fear from any external enemies, and hence had no sense of inferiority in its dealings with Arabs or whites. One of Speke's first experiences in the country illustrated the self-confidence of this regional superpower, when he proposed to return to Karagwe if Mtesa failed to send him

supplies. 'Whose leave have you got to do that?' asked his guide. 'Do you suppose you can do as you like in this country?' Later, having taken a liking to his visitor, Mtesa's commander-in-chief proposed to send an army to dethrone Queen Victoria and install Speke in her place, and was only dissuaded after the explorer demonstrated on a map the respective sizes of Buganda and the British Empire!

At this date Mtesa was energetically following the policies of his predecessor Suna in both domestic and external spheres. Speke describes him as a capricious tyrant, who imposed a ferocious system of discipline on his court and subordinate officials, and slaughtered his own people on the slightest pretext. The best-known example of his tyranny is an incident in which the king ordered a page to go out and test a new gun by shooting someone at random, but as neither Speke nor Mtesa witnessed the actual shooting there must be a suspicion that the affair was a sham, perhaps designed specifically to impress the white man. Speke was told that, as the king's guest, he was expected to take whatever he wanted by force from the populace, just as the soldiers and royal officials did. This account contrasts with that of Stanley, who in 1875 claimed to have found a more mature and statesmanlike Mtesa, and who denied witnessing the sort of bloodshed which had so shocked Speke. No doubt in 1862 the young king was still insecure on his throne, and began by following unthinkingly the example of Suna 'the cruel'; possibly his tyranny became less extreme in later years as he learnt the subtleties of government, although other observers state that the arbitrary killings did, in fact, continue.

In external policy, certainly, little had changed. Mtesa continued to despatch the traditional military expeditions to overawe his neighbours, and to gather slaves and plunder. He now ruled directly an area of about 70,000 square miles (181,300 square km), and received at least nominal tribute from most of the states around the shores of Lake Victoria. According to Stanley, even Mirambo sent ambassadors to 'kneel and tender their allegiance'. Mtesa intervened in Bunyoro on several occasions during the 1860s, and in 1864 a clash with Samuel Baker's expedition and its 'Turkish' allies from the Sudan was only narrowly averted. Another major incursion into Bunyoro took place in 1870, when the death of King Kamrasi was followed by a war over the succession. Here the Baganda had their first recorded experience of combat against troops armed with modern firearms, when they encountered groups of 'Turks' fighting on the opposing side. They attempted to assault a fort garrisoned by one disciplined unit of Sudanese, but were beaten off with heavy losses. Nevertheless, Mtesa's nominee, Kabarega, was successfully installed on the throne of Bunyoro.

The potential threat from the Sudan became reality two years

later, when the Egyptian expedition led by Baker in 1872 burnt the Banyoro capital at Masindi. Mtesa sought to forestall a similar invasion of Buganda by opening diplomatic relations with Baker's successor as Governor of the southern Sudan, Colonel Gordon. Gordon sent an envoy, the American Colonel Chaillé-Long, who later claimed that Mtesa had agreed to a treaty which placed his country under Egyptian protection. Gordon — who had already established forts in Bunyoro — was at first bent on making this nebulous agreement a reality, and sent 150 Egyptians under Nuer Aga to build another fort in the Bugandan province of Bulondoganyi. There can be little doubt that the Baganda army could easily have crushed this tiny force, but Mtesa preferred to deal with it by less direct means. He pretended to agree to the building of the fort, but first persuaded Nuer Aga to visit the royal capital at Kampala, where he contrived to send away all of the expedition's porters and so render the Egyptians immobile. They were kept as de facto prisoners until Gordon, who confided in his diary that 'Mutesa has annexed my soldiers; he has not been annexed himself', withdrew them and recognised Buganda's independence. Mtesa's only confrontation with a well-armed foreign power thus ended in a virtually bloodless victory.

The Egyptian threat vanished in the 1880s, as Gordon's exhaustion and disillusionment, combined with the effects of the Mahdist revolt in the Sudan and diplomatic pressure from Britain and Zanzibar, forced the Khedive to abandon his dreams of a Central African empire. Meanwhile Mtesa continued to expand his power in other directions. In 1875 Stanley witnessed what appears to have been the last major attempt at territorial conquest, when he was persuaded to join a campaign against the people of Buvuma, a large island in Lake Victoria off the coast of Busoga.

The Battle of Ingira Island, September–October 1875

Stanley accompanied the huge army which Mtesa despatched against Buvuma in August 1875, and gives us a detailed order of battle:

<i>Name of General</i>	<i>Number of sub-chiefs</i>
Pokino, Prime Minister of Buganda and Chief of Buddu	6
Chambarango, Chief of Busiro	6
Kaeema	6
Kitunzi, Chief of the Katonga Valley	2
Sekebobo, Chief of Chagwe	24
Mkwenda	19
Kasuju	5
Kagu	5
Kangau	18
Kimbugwe	24
Katambale	2
Nana Masurie, Mtesa's mother	10

Mtesa's bodyguard numbered not less than 3,000, and each other sub-chief led between 50 and 3,000 men. Generals Mkwenda and Sekibobo each commanded a total of around 30,000. Because of these varying numbers it is difficult to arrive at an overall strength for the army, but Stanley estimated it at 125,000 Baganda, plus another 25,000 for the allied contingents, which came from Karagwe, Busongora, Bukedi, Busoga, Sese, and the other islands of Lake Victoria, as well as the musket-armed followers of some Arab traders who were resident in the country. There were also 325 canoes of various sizes, of which about 230 were large enough to be useful for war, with some 8,600 non-combatant paddlers.

The enemy had occupied the small island of Ingira, which lay between Buvuma and the mainland, and which Mtesa had intended to use as a stepping stone to Buvuma itself. Apart from the Bavuma, and many of the disaffected coastal people of Busoga, warriors from Kitenteh and other nearby islands had joined the resistance. Stanley does not give an estimate of the total opposing force, but he mentions about 100 Bavuma canoes, as well as another 150 or more supplied by their allies. It is clear, however, that — as in all of their campaigns — the Baganda had a massive numerical advantage. Their main body was led on the march by Mkwenda, followed by Kangau, and then by Mtesa with his bodyguard, with the other divisions bringing up the rear. They set up their base camp on a promontory on the mainland only 700 yds (640 m) from Ingira Island. Including camp followers, Stanley claims that the army may have numbered as many as 600,000 people — an admittedly incredible total, which nevertheless conveys his impression of a host so large as to be effectively uncountable.

Although most of the fighting took place between the rival canoe fleets, it is clear from Stanley's account that the Baganda had little idea of naval tactics, but attempted to fight a conventional land battle on the water. The first couple of days saw only indecisive skirmishing as the Bavuma paddled their vessels near to the shore, showing off their skill with their spears and dodging the occasional musket ball fired at them. Then Sekibobo was ordered to embark his men in the canoes — which Stanley estimated could carry between 16,000 and 20,000 fighting men as well as the paddlers — and cross to the island. The Baganda vessels moved out in a compact line of battle, but the outnumbered Bavuma split into two groups, paddled out to the flanks and swooped on the unwieldy mass, capturing 14 canoes before retreating into deeper water. Sekibobo did not follow

them, but retreated to the mainland.

The Baganda had proved to be very timid in fighting on the water, which Mtesa attributed to the fact that, unlike their opponents, they came mostly from inland regions and did not know how to swim. Stanley then advised him to build a causeway out to the island, and 40,000 men were detailed to collect stones and tree branches and throw them into the lake. Unfortunately they built the causeway much wider than necessary — about 100 ft (30 m), instead of the 10 ft (3 m) which Stanley recommended — so the work was never completed. They did, however, reach a point 130 yds (118 m) out, where a force of about 100 musketeers (according to the account in *Through the Dark Continent*; another version in Stanley's diary says 50) and four 'small boat howitzers' were placed to give fire support. A canoe full of emissaries was then sent to Ingira to propose peace, only to be massacred by the enemy.

On 14 September, therefore, Mtesa decided on an all-out offensive. The Baganda fleet formed into a long line and advanced to within musket range of the island. Then the gunners in the canoes commenced a 'steady, deliberate' fire. This provoked the Bavuma to rush out in their canoes, which according to Stanley numbered 194, against about 230 in the Baganda fleet. The Baganda line fell back slowly, then parted on either side of the causeway, whereupon the cannon and the musketeers opened fire. Their shooting caused 'very little damage', but the Bavuma — who had no firearms at all — were taken by surprise and fled. Once again the Baganda failed to follow up, convincing Stanley that they had no chance of success in canoe fighting. His contacts at the court later informed him that Mtesa had bitterly denounced his commanders for cowardice and disloyalty, after which they swore to fight bravely in future, and invited the king to cut them into pieces if they retreated. According to his diary, it was apparently at this point that Stanley built a 'floating fort', made from three large canoes lashed together, and surrounded by a palisade constructed in wickerwork fashion from inch-thick wooden poles. This contraption was supposed to be spear-proof, and was to be manned by 150 musketeers. The account in *Through the Dark Continent* puts its appearance in early October, and implies that it was a decisive factor in persuading the enemy to make peace, but in the diary version Stanley says (more plausibly) that it was never used in action — the Baganda refused to operate it, as they feared that they would be unable to retreat and so would be trapped if the enemy managed to board it.

On 18 September the Baganda fleet advanced again. Stanley had the opportunity to observe the line of battle and noted that the centre, which consisted of 100 canoes, was entrusted to the veteran

general Kauta, while Chambarango commanded 50 vessels on the right flank, and Mkwenda 80 on the left. The centre division paddled up to within 30 yds (27 m) of the island and engaged in a firefight with a band of Bavuma slingers. These men apparently believed that a full-scale landing was intended, and so stood up bravely to oppose it until they were broken by the Baganda musket fire. The Bavuma then manned their canoes and charged out, but Mkwenda on the left inflicted serious damage by concentrating the fire of his musketeers on the boats, rather than on their crews. The Baganda then fell back as before in good order, and lured the impetuous enemy within range of the causeway. This time the gunners showed more ability; they trained the howitzers on a group of 20 enemy vessels and smashed most of them, then followed up with a second volley, firing bolts of iron 3 ins (76 mm) long. The Bavuma fled, and an exultant Mtesa ordered the ploy to be repeated. "Go at them again," said he, "and show them what fighting is." Incredibly, the Bavuma fell for the same trick twice more — a fact which suggests that their main weakness was the lack of any kind of discipline or overall direction. Certainly Stanley's account never hints that they showed any sign of centralised command.

Nevertheless, the Baganda victory was still not decisive, and although the enemy showed clear signs of demoralisation when another battle was fought a few days later, Mtesa's men made no attempt to follow up their advantage and land on the island. When battle was joined again on the following day the Bavuma could still muster 203 canoes against their enemies' 214, and the Baganda had almost run out of gunpowder. Perhaps for this reason they broke under the Bavuma attack, and were closely pursued by the victors until the howitzers again drove them off. It is at this point in his narrative, on 13 October, that Stanley describes the launching of his 'floating fort'. In view of the discrepancies in his accounts it is impossible to place much reliance on his argument that this 'curious structure' terrified the superstitious Bavuma into surrendering. The two sides did make a peace agreement that day, but although Stanley interpreted it as a victory for Mtesa it seems likely that it was in fact a face-saving deal, in which the Bavuma promised to pay a nominal tribute while the king abandoned his original plan of occupying their islands.

Stanley's main contribution to the history of Buganda was well intended, but led to unforeseen conflict. In November 1875, while still on his journey across Africa, he sent back to England a letter in which he appealed for Christian missionaries to go to Buganda to counter the growing influence of the Arabs. The response was swift: the first expedition despatched by the Church Missionary Society reached the

kingdom in July 1877, even before Stanley had returned home. Two years later two French Roman Catholic missionaries also arrived, and Mtesa gave them permission to stay and preach alongside the Protestants. By the time of the king's death in 1884 both denominations had made significant numbers of converts, dividing the country into opposing camps and unwittingly setting the scene for more than a decade of civil war.

The civil wars

A major weakness of the centralised state which Suna and Mtesa had created was its dependence on the personality of the king. Mtesa's successor, his son Mwanga II, was a weak character who was unable to control his over-mighty officials and allowed the kingdom to disintegrate into factionalism and civil war. The main split was along religious lines. Mtesa and many of his leading officers had on the whole favoured Islam, but there were now growing numbers of Christians — divided into the Protestant faction, the *Wa-ingresa*, who tended to support British interests, and the *Wa-fransa* or Catholics, backed by the French missionaries. Mwanga believed that the old pagan religion was the best guarantee of his position and so was most closely associated with a fourth, traditionalist group. These earned the name of *Wa-bangi* from their habit of smoking hemp, or *bhang*. The king finally lost the support of the *Wa-ingresa* party in October 1885 by ordering the murder of Bishop Hannington, who had attempted to enter the country from the east via Masailand and Kavirondo. An old prophecy had foretold that an enemy would attack Buganda by this route, and the paranoid Mwanga appears to have mistaken the Bishop's party for a military expedition. He was saved from immediate British retaliation by the fall of Gladstone's government following the botched attempt to relieve Gordon at Khartoum, but then embarked on a brutal persecution of the Christian converts which — together with a policy of weakening and humiliating the men who had served his father — alienated many of his own chiefs.

The first of a series of civil wars broke out in 1888, and pitted the advocates of all three new religions against the king and his *Wa-bangi*. Mwanga had ordered the chiefs to assemble for a naval exercise on Lake Victoria, but when they refused to obey his orders he fled to his palace at Mengo. However, he failed to secure the keys to the royal armoury, enabling the leader of the Protestant faction, Apolo Kagga, to break in and distribute the guns and ammunition to his own followers. The next day the rebels advanced on the palace in three divisions. Mwanga himself opened fire on them, but fled when one of his pages was shot dead at his side. The leader of the Muslims, Prince

Kalema, was proclaimed king in Mwanga's place.

War soon erupted between the Christians and the Muslims. Kalema occupied the capital at Kampala, massacred most of the royal family to remove any possible Christian rivals, and forced Mwanga to take refuge with Christian missionaries further south. At the Battle of Mawuki, one wing of the Christian army was at first successful, but the other wing ran into an ambush and most of its commanders were killed. Mwanga now joined the Christians and raised another army, but they were again defeated in Buddu and forced to take refuge on Bulungwe Island in Lake Victoria.

The first in a series of victories which turned the tables in favour of the Christians occurred in September 1889, when Mwanga and his new allies received a large consignment of guns and ammunition from Charles Stokes, who was operating out of what was now German-controlled territory south of the lake. The Christian war fleet then sailed out under the leadership of Gabriel Kintu, and intercepted a dhow which was ferrying guns and supplies to the Muslims from the still independent Zanzibaris of Tabora. After a fierce fight the dhow was blown up. The surviving Arabs were taken to Magu, on the southern shore of Lake Victoria, and ransomed in exchange for 70 more guns and 500 lbs (227 kg) of powder. Kalema quickly set about building his own canoe fleet, but Mwanga despatched another force which destroyed the half-completed vessels and killed the Muslim officer in command. An increasingly desperate Kalema then sent two expeditions into Busoga to raise the people in revolt against Mwanga, but both were annihilated. The Christian commander in the second of these actions was Semei Kakunguru, who together with Gabriel Kintu was to become one of the most outstanding generals of the civil wars.

In western Buganda the Christians under Apolo Kaggwa, after some initial successes, were beaten at the Battle of Nansenyi. Mwanga sent a force of about 1,000 musketeers led by Sepiriya Mutagwanya, but when their commander fell ill he was replaced — luckily for the Christians — by Kakunguru. The reinforced Christians then embarked on a brilliant campaign, apparently under the leadership of Kakunguru, although the missionary R.P. Ashe says that Kaggwa was still in overall command. They defeated and encircled a Muslim army at Bunkabira, then advanced to the outskirts of Kampala. On 5 October 1889 Prince Kalema launched a surprise attack on the Christians at Kitebi, but he was again defeated and was forced to abandon the capital. At about this time a report by Bishop Mackay assessed the strengths of the warring factions as follows: the Protestants and Catholics together possessed about 1,500 men, with 1,000 guns but very little powder. The Muslims had over 2,000 guns,

and were supported by 'all the Arabs and their slaves'. Mwanga himself also had 'several thousands of heathen adherents, armed with spear and shield'.

A week after the battle at Kitebi Mwanga was back in his palace, but on learning of a counter-attack by Kalema he sent Apolo Kaggwa against the enemy with 2,600 musketeers. This figure is obviously inconsistent with the Christian strength given by Mackay, but may have included a number of musket-armed pagans loyal to Mwanga. Nevertheless, Kaggwa was wounded and his army scattered, forcing Mwanga to return hastily to Bulungugwe, but Gabriel Kintu rapidly mustered another army and decisively crushed the Muslims at the Battle of Bulwanyi. Kalema fled into exile in Bunyoro, where he died, and his followers were reduced to guerrilla activity in the frontier districts.

The colonial era

The Anglo-German Agreement of 1886, which had established the British and German spheres of influence in East Africa, only covered the region east of Lake Victoria, leaving the question of Buganda undecided. When Carl Peters' 'German Emin Pasha Relief Expedition' arrived in Buganda in February 1890 he succeeded in persuading Mwanga — now back in control — to sign a treaty accepting German protection. This, however, was quickly superseded by another Anglo-German Agreement later the same year, which firmly placed Buganda in the British sphere. Frederick Jackson, in the employ of the Imperial British East Africa Company, arrived with 180 armed men in April, but the *Wa-fransa* faction refused to deal with him, and he found the *Wa-ingresa* too weak to overrule them, so he did not stay. In December a column of 300 men, supported by a Maxim gun, arrived under Captain F.D. Lugard to take control of Buganda on behalf of the Company. Mwanga was obliged to sign another treaty, surrendering his sovereignty to the Company as the representative of the protecting power, Great Britain. During the next year Lugard tried to keep the peace between the increasingly hostile *Wa-ingresa* and *Wa-fransa* factions, 'making it clear that while religion was absolutely free in Uganda, the entire country was now British'. In 1891, at the head of a combined force of his own men and the Christian Baganda, he undertook a campaign against the remaining Baganda Muslims.

The Battle of the Kanyangoro River, 7 May 1891

On 5 May Lugard discovered the Muslim army in a strong defensive position, holding a line of wooded hills overlooking a ford over the River Kanyangoro. His force consisted of two companies of Zanzibaris,

each of about 70 men; a 100-strong company of Sudanese; and a Maxim gun. The allied Baganda contingent, led by the *Katikiro*, included 4,700 men with guns and about five times as many spearmen, but the latter were not regarded as proper combatants as their only role was to pursue a defeated enemy. The Muslim force is said to have comprised 3,600 guns, with an unknown number of spearmen.

The river was too deep to wade across except at the ford, and there was no clear line of sight for the Maxim, so Lugard realised that a frontal attack would be impossible. He and the *Katikiro* therefore agreed to cross the river lower down and outflank the enemy. On the 7th they advanced to the attack, with Lugard's troops drawn up in the centre. The Sudanese deployed in line in front, supported by the Zanzibaris and the Maxim. The Baganda advanced much more quickly on the flanks, and charged up the hills and into the forest before the askaris could open fire. The subsequent fighting took place mainly in thick jungle and was too confused for Lugard to tell what was happening. The Maxim was never engaged, as the cover was too dense for any targets to be identified, and Lugard admits that his men played little real part in the action. At one point a part of the Christian Baganda army fell back down the slopes towards them in rout, pursued by the enemy, but before the askaris could intervene the rest of the Muslim army had fled. Total Christian casualties — all among the Baganda — were 30 dead and 70 wounded, compared to 300–400 Muslims.

Lugard then led his victorious army on a march through hostile Bunyoro, and returned to Kampala in December with an extra 100 Sudanese askaris recruited from Emin Pasha's old garrisons. Waiting for him was a letter recalling him on the grounds that the IBEA Company was on the verge of bankruptcy. In the event, enough money was raised privately in England to maintain the British presence for another year, but Lugard's diary contains his revealing predictions of what would have happened if it had been removed. He believed that civil war would break out at once; that Mwanga, in alliance with the *Wa-fransa*, would defeat the Protestants; and that the Muslims would then return and reconquer the country, killing or driving out the missionaries.

In January 1892 Lugard was encamped on top of a hill at Kampala, facing Mwanga's palace on Mengo Hill. His force consisted of two British officers, about 300 armed askaris, and a pair of Maxim guns. When fighting finally broke out between the Catholic and Protestant factions on the 24th the rival armies deployed for battle within view of his camp. Lugard had apparently feared that the outnumbered *Wa-ingresa* would be massacred, and had issued 500

muskets and some Snider rifles to their men. The resulting 'Second Battle of Mengo' caused a diplomatic row between Britain and France, and widely differing accounts of it were given by Lugard and by the French missionaries. When the *Wa-fransa* launched their attack, Lugard opened fire with his Maxims on their positions on Mengo Hill at a range of 1,400 yds (1,280 m), scattering them. He later claimed that one gun was out of action from the start with a broken rivet pin, the other had jammed repeatedly, and that their effect had been mainly psychological. On the other hand the Reverend Ashe, an eyewitness, contradicts this, saying that at least one gun 'was well aimed and steadily handled ... and a hailstorm of bullets from the gun played on the deadly spot'.

Mwanga and the *Wa-fransa* fled from Kampala and once again took refuge on Bulingugwe Island. On 30 January Lugard sent his colleague Captain Williams to assault the island. The Protestant Baganda 'were not of much use by water', says Lugard, but the Sudanese managed to land on the island covered by fire from the one operational Maxim. Mwanga escaped again, and the *Wa-fransa* regrouped in Buddu near the German border. They had apparently hoped to receive support from the German garrison at Bukoba, but this was not forthcoming. There was already a British outpost in Buddu, held by a small garrison of Sudanese askaris under Ferag Effendi; this was besieged by the *Wa-fransa*, and when his supplies ran out Ferag evacuated it and, in Lugard's words, fought his way back to Kampala 'with great gallantry'.

Whether or not the fighting had been deliberately engineered by Lugard, the result was a decisive victory for the pro-British faction. Lugard toyed with the idea of placing a Muslim, Mbogo, on the throne, but this drastic step was not necessary. Mwanga soon made his submission, followed by most of the *Wa-fransa* and *Wa-bangi*. After 1892 the *Wa-ingresa* remained firmly in power in Buganda, and in March the following year they welcomed the expedition under Sir Gerald Portal, with 250 soldiers, which was sent to bring the country under official British protection. Portal returned home two months later, leaving Major Macdonald of the Royal Engineers, who had arrived at the head of a survey expedition for the proposed Uganda Railway, as Acting Administrator.

From then on Baganda armies regularly fought alongside their new masters, principally against the Banyoro, but also in other campaigns in neighbouring areas of British East Africa. The Bavuma Islanders, who had successfully defied Mtesa in 1875 and had been engaging in piracy on the lake ever since, were subdued by Williams in February 1893. In 1894 fighting flared up once more against the Baganda Muslims. Some of the Sudanese troops, led by Selim Bey,

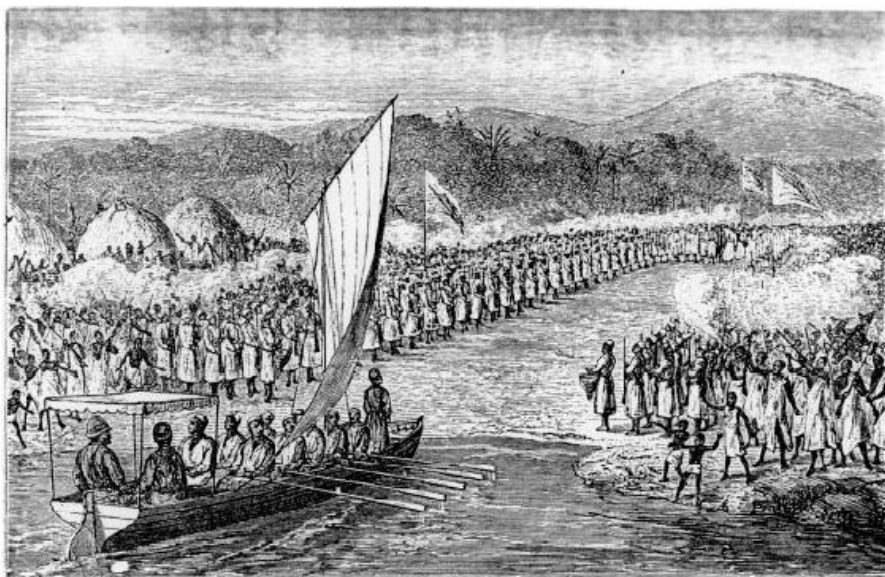
threatened to mutiny and join the rebels and had to be disarmed. Some observers felt that this unrest was due to insensitive treatment of the Sudanese by Major Macdonald, who had tried to force them to take an oath of loyalty to the Queen which conflicted with their allegiance to their old employer, the Khedive of Egypt. (This charge of insensitivity was to resurface when a much more serious mutiny broke out in Macdonald's command three years later.) A column of Muslims now invaded Toro, possibly in an attempt to link up with the anti-British Banyoro, and for a while it looked as if Major Owen, who was operating from there against Bunyoro, would be caught between the two hostile armies. Then a column of loyal Baganda arrived in pursuit of the rebels, and in co-operation with Owen defeated them, killing 600. The remaining Muslims then surrendered without further resistance. Meanwhile Semei Kakunguru's success had attracted the envy of Apolo Kagga, who was now Prime Minister. Kakunguru therefore went into voluntary exile, setting up his own power base among the Lango in a region recently captured from Bunyoro. Here he remained independent — although on good terms with the British — until 1902.

Mwanga had remained on the throne under the British authorities, but in July 1896 he fled from the capital and instigated another revolt. A clash took place at Kabuwoko which left 11 British askaris and 23 rebels dead, after which Mwanga retreated into German territory. He was declared deposed, and his one-year-old son Daudi Cwa was crowned king. In 1897 Mwanga returned secretly by canoe across the lake and raised yet another army, but this was defeated at the town of Nyendo, forcing him to flee yet again. He continued a guerrilla campaign until 1899 with the assistance of his old general Gabriel Kintu, who earned a reputation as a master of ambushes and hit-and-run tactics. A series of campaigns involving combined British and Baganda expeditions eventually drove the rebels out of the country and into Bunyoro, where they joined up with the remaining anti-British forces led by Kabarega. Mwanga was captured together with Kabarega in April 1899, after which the fighting in the region at last came to an end.

Military organisation

Baganda society was divided into three broad social classes: the aristocrats or *bakungu*, who were believed to be descended from the household troops of the legendary founder of the kingdom, Kimera; the *batongoli*, or middle-ranking officials; and finally the mass of the common people, who were known as *bakopi*. Stanley interpreted the singular terms *mkungu* and *mtongoleh* as military ranks, equivalent to

general and colonel respectively, although these officials in fact had civil as well as military duties. The people were also organised into numerous clans claiming a common descent; these were not formal political or military units, although during the 19th century a handful of clans provided most of the ruling establishment. However, in practice power was not monopolised by a hereditary caste, but was open to talent — or at least to anyone who enjoyed the favour of the king, who could raise men to the nobility or demote them at will. Outsiders were invariably impressed by the discipline and good order of the whole of Baganda society, and by the respect with which officials of all ranks were treated.



*Stanley's expedition is received by king Mtesa of Buganda, April 1875. The explorer's account shows that by this time the Baganda ruling class had adopted many items of Arab costume as well as a substantial number of firearms. (H.M. Stanley, *Through the Dark Continent*, 1879)*

By 1800 at the latest a complex system of government was in place — ‘an endless and complicated network of chiefs, sub-chiefs, petty chieftains’, says Portal, who led the British mission in 1893. The Baganda heartland was divided into counties, or *saza*, whose chiefs might belong to the local aristocracy but were more often appointed by the king. Some of these posts also involved their holders in various duties at court or with the army. The chief of Kyaddondo county, for example, had the title of *Sabaddu* and was in charge of court administration, assisted by the *Sabakaki* or ‘chief of the gate guards’, and the *Senkoole*, ‘keeper of the royal fire’. The chief of Singo county was entitled *Sabagabo*, ‘leader of shield-bearers’, and was second in

importance only to the *Sabaddu*. The commander-in-chief of the army was known as the *Kanraviona*, and the king's prime minister as the *Katikiro*.

Several of the partly assimilated states outside the boundaries of Buganda proper were strategically vital to the kingdom because they possessed skills or resources unavailable elsewhere. Buddu and Kooki supplied iron ore and expert smiths, while the Sese Islands were a source of seafaring and canoe building skills. Special arrangements were therefore made to ensure their loyalty: for example, Busoga was divided into 17 districts, each ruled jointly by a local chief and a Baganda official. Newly conquered regions were generally left initially under their own chiefs, but were gradually drawn into the Baganda system, with their own leaders either replaced by Baganda candidates or — especially in the wealthier and more important provinces like Buddu and Busoga — made subordinate to a royal appointee. In many cases the general responsible for conquering the province was rewarded with the post of viceroy. The reigns of Suna and Mtesa saw the establishment of a system of military districts which was outside the traditional county organisation and may have been intended to streamline the process of mobilisation, as well as providing a check on the power of the civil chiefs. The governor of each of these districts, who was called a *mutongole*, was appointed by the king, and was both an administrative official and the military leader of the troops levied from the district.

A number of special units existed independently of both of these systems. One was the *Ekitongole Ekogowa*, a combined honour guard and military band established by Mtesa in the late 1870s in imitation of the escorts which had accompanied Colonel Chaillé-Long and other Egyptian emissaries. The members of this unit were trained in marching, drill, and the playing of trumpets and drums, but do not appear to have ever been sent on campaign. In about 1886 Mwanga set up the *Ekitongole Ekijasi*, which some observers thought was intended to be the start of a thorough reform of the military system, but the civil wars broke out soon afterwards and any such reform failed to materialise. Possibly this unit was simply a bodyguard formed in response to the increasing disaffection of the *batongole* and other traditional chiefs. Its commander was known as the *Mujasi*.

According to J.H. Speke the actual process of raising an army was, in contrast to this intricate system of command, fairly informal. Until the *Ekitongole Ekijasi* was established there was no standing army, but, as C.T. Wilson puts it, 'every man who can handle a spear and shield is a soldier'. The king would instruct the *Kam-raviona* to select a number of divisional commanders, depending on the requirements of the proposed campaign, and would personally

approve the choice. It was then the responsibility of these officers to raise their own contingents from their own sub-chiefs and the peasants under their control. All Baganda men were theoretically subject to the call-up, although in practice the burden of military service was not evenly distributed. Penalties for avoiding conscription, or for subsequently running away, were savage: Speke says that 'the runaways, called women, are drilled with a red-hot iron until they are men no longer, and die for their cowardice'.

It is clear from Stanley's order of battle quoted above that unit sizes were not standardised. Each minor chief would contribute his own contingent of anything from 50 men upwards, and these would then be combined into larger units of equally variable composition, under the great officers of state. According to J.F. Cunningham, writing in 1905, the men of Buddu province were organised into four 'battalions'. Speke refers to a Basoga 'battalion' which consisted of 'what might be termed three companies, each containing 200 men', but it is not known how widespread this organisation was.

The system of command, and what might be called staff-work, was remarkably advanced. Speke was surprised to find that both Mtesa and his *Kamraviona* understood how to read a map, and by the 1870s orders were routinely issued in writing, using the Arabic script. It may not just have been important chiefs who were instructed in this way: by the end of the century literacy was widespread, and Portal was astonished when in 1893 a humble boatman refused his offer of beads and asked instead for something to read — either in Luganda or in Swahili! The missionary Felkin, who was in Buganda in 1878, noted that Mtesa had a very detailed knowledge of his units' strengths and movements. This was accomplished by means of a board on which soldiers were represented by pegs — white for a group of 10 men, black for 100, and red for 1,000. When an army was to be raised he would hand the appropriate number of pegs to each chief, who then levied the men. At the end of every campaign the pegs were replaced on the board, after casualties had been deducted. Unfortunately the detailed workings of this board are not clear, as it was regarded as a state secret. It was usually kept covered with a cloth, and Felkin was never permitted to study it.

Battlefield control and tactics

In the field orders and signals were given by drumbeats, each unit having a distinctive beat. Mtesa himself was accompanied on campaign by a band of about 50 drums and 100 fifes. Carl Peters describes the drums as 'especially effective, even to a European ear. Three drums, tuned in fifths, are beaten in a peculiar roll, which has a

solemn, dignified, and at the same time menacing effect.' By the 1870s flags — 'crimson-and-white-barred standards' according to Stanley — were also in widespread use, each unit or detachment marching 'under the flag of its respective leader'. Unit cohesion was aided not only by the flags and drums, but also by distinctive war-cries. The men would shout out the title of their leader, followed by the last two syllables repeated. Stanley gives several examples: 'Chamburango, angoo, angoo!', 'Mkwenda, kwenda, kwenda!', 'Sekibobo, bobo, bobo!', 'Kitunzi, tunzi, tunzi!', and 'Mukavya, kavya, kavya!'. The last was the name by which Mtesa had been known as a young man, and was the war cry of his personal bodyguard. Elsewhere Stanley describes the warriors of Bumbireh Island in Lake Victoria uttering 'the well-known melodious war-cries employed by most of the Central African tribes, "Hehu-a-hehu-u-u-u!"'

One area of weakness in the system was the commissariat. Armies were expected to live off the land, even in Buganda itself, and the troops simply requisitioned what they needed from the local peasantry, often with considerable brutality. The result was that the ordinary Baganda would flee at the approach of their own forces. This may partly explain why the country's territorial expansion had begun to falter by the mid-19th century. Areas like Busoga, which were fertile farming country like Buganda itself, or to a lesser extent cattle-rich Bunyoro, could be traversed without much difficulty, but once the lakeshore regions had been occupied it was not feasible to use the same strategy in the open steppes east of Mount Elgon, nor in the dry bush country of Tanganyika. Buganda's overwhelming numerical strength could only be applied in areas where large numbers of men could be fed. Thus although oral tradition tells of raids as far as Burundi, the Kenya Highlands, and the Nyamwezi country, the kings of Buganda seem never to have seriously contemplated permanent occupation so far afield. This foraging system had one advantage, however, for Lugard noted that during the wars of the 1890s Baganda forces were hardly ever surprised, even though they did not deploy scouts at any distance from the main body, because of the groups of foragers who were always roaming in the vicinity.

It was often said that the individual Baganda soldier was inferior as a fighter to many of his adversaries, and that the strength of the kingdom lay in its numbers rather than in the ferocity or courage of its warriors. Several witnesses relate that their own commanders often disparaged them; Lugard, for example, was told that the reason that scouts were not deployed was that once out of sight of their officers they would hide in the grass and then return later with false reports. On the other hand the good order and discipline of Baganda armies, and the speed with which they could

manoeuvre, are frequently singled out for praise. According to Grant they were 'as smart and obedient soldiers as any in existence'. Speke writes of a Basoga unit manoeuvring with considerable precision at one of Mtesa's parades. It 'received orders to march past in single file from the right of companies, at a long trot, and re-form again at the other end of the square ... They thus moved in three lines of single rank and file, at fifteen to twenty paces asunder, with the same high action and elongated step, the ground leg only being bent, to give their strides the greater force.' Stanley was told that the Baganda always moved at a trot when on the march. His verdict on the Bavuma campaign of 1875 contrasts the 'intrepidity and desperate courage' of the enemy with the Baganda's own 'coolness and method', which he attributes to the strict discipline instilled by the king. Even at this relatively early date Mtesa's bodyguard was formally drilled in imitation of the askaris who accompanied his European visitors. According to Stanley they 'stood at "shoulder-arms" in double ranks' before departing for the Bavuma campaign. Larger forces displayed similar co-ordination and discipline. Lieutenant Vandeleur, writing about the 1895 expedition to Bunyoro, comments on the skill with which the entire Baganda army extended into line after a river crossing, and Stanley describes units being told off to act as advance, rear, and flank guards.

Tactically, Cunningham says that the Baganda preferred frontal attacks to outflanking manoeuvres, as they were perceived as more honourable, but accounts of the 1890s often refer to flank marches against defensive positions. C.T. Wilson describes their wars, especially among themselves, as exceptionally destructive of life. He recounts a story of one battle in which the Baganda lost half their men, even though they were the victors, and suggests that this was one reason why women were far more numerous than men in the country. According to an account of Suna's conquest of Busoga, collected by Stanley, the Basoga formed up in four ranks: slingers at the front, then spearmen, then another rank of slingers on higher ground if possible, and finally a reserve of spearmen. It is not known whether they retained this system when fighting as part of the Baganda army, and in fact Basoga slingers are seldom mentioned subsequently, although many of the islanders of Lake Victoria continued to make use of slings.

Among Mtesa's inventory in the mid-1870s, according to Gordon, were 'five little brass guns' without carriages. These no doubt included the four 'small boat howitzers' which Stanley saw in action at Ingira Island in 1875, and which Wilson also referred to in 1878. We are not told where he had acquired them, but they were probably brought in by Arab traders. At the time of Stanley's visit Mtesa's

bodyguard comprised 600 musketeers, while three years later the Baganda were said to possess about 2,000 small arms of all kinds. Buganda was a long way from the main trade routes, and it was not until the civil wars of the late 1880s and 1890s that arms dealers found it worth their while to transport large numbers of weapons so far inland. Then the quality of guns available, as well as the quantity, began to improve dramatically. By 1888 Bishop Mackay was complaining of the activities of his former missionary colleague Charles Stokes, who had turned to gun-running and imported 100 breech-loading rifles and 2,000 rounds of ammunition into Buganda. On his arrival in 1893, Gerald Portal found guns and ammunition freely available to the population, who had a reputation as good shots by African standards. As we have seen in accounts of the campaigns of the 1890s, by that time, although spearmen still greatly outnumbered the musketeers, the fighting strength of an army was reckoned purely in the number of its guns.

During the colonial era the combined British-Baganda armies were generally so dominated numerically by the latter that their opponents often thought that the British were merely mercenaries employed by the Baganda kings. Colville gives a complete order of battle for the army which advanced into Bunyoro in December 1893, which is worth quoting in full as an example of such combined forces. The ratio between riflemen, musketeers, and spearmen in the Baganda contingent, which was led by Semei Kakunguru, is probably fairly typical:

Combatants

Europeans	8
Native officers	14
Sudanese NCOs and men	415
Baganda great chiefs	15
Baganda riflemen	207
Baganda musketeers	3,308
Baganda spearmen	10,600
Masai spearmen	11
Swahili headmen	8
Swahili askaris	25
Swahili porters (armed)	209
	14,820

Non-combatants

Swahili porters (unarmed)	56
Enlisted Lendu tribesmen	97
Sudanese followers	100
Baganda followers	1,000
Baganda attached to headquarters	20
Allied Banyoro chiefs	2
Banyoro bearer company	110
Banyoro interpreters and guides	13
Servants and interpreters	34

The navy

From about 1800 onwards, the Baganda began to develop a strong canoe fleet on Lake Victoria. They had possessed a trading fleet since at least the beginning of the 18th century, and the increasing use of naval power was probably intended to protect their growing long-distance trade, as well as to extend the strategic reach of the army. The first recorded naval campaign took place against the Lango on the shores of Lake Kyoga, on the upper Nile, during the reign of King Kamanya. The account collected by Stanley suggests that the Baganda regarded the use of canoes to transport troops as a novel tactic at this time, but from the 1840s onwards it became increasingly commonplace. By the mid-1870s Mtesa's war fleet could carry a force of 16–20,000 fighting men. The best canoes were made by the people of the Sese Islands, but according to Stanley even these were made only of planks sewn together with fibre, and were not always seaworthy in bad weather. In 1871 Mtesa sent envoys to Zanzibar to ask for the loan of shipwrights to instruct his craftsmen; this did not happen, but in 1881 the first Arab dhow was launched on Lake Victoria.

The 'admiral' or official in charge of a fleet was known as a *Gabunga*. It appears that his power was gradually reduced under Mtesa until it became a virtually honorary position, with the local chiefs commanding their own contingents more or less independently. In Kamanya's day fleets were said to number up to 500 canoes, but these vessels were probably mostly very small. Under Mtesa there were three broad classes of canoes. The smallest varied from 18 to 30 ft (5.5–9.2 m) in length, and according to Stanley might carry as few as three to six fighting men. The second class measured roughly 50 ft (15.3 m), and the largest, which had become common by the 1870s, were about 72 ft (22 m) long, and 7 ft (2.1 m) in width. These could each carry 60–100 soldiers, and were propelled by 64 paddlers. The biggest of all was a vessel recorded by Mackay in 1883, which was 80 ft (24.4 m) in length, with a beam of 5 ft (1.5 m). The canoes were invariably painted red, and their curved prows were decorated with giraffe tails, antelope horns, or bunches of feathers.

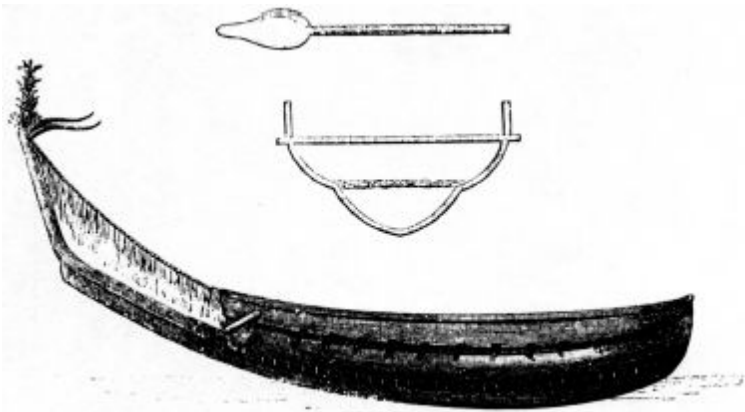
There was a permanent fleet of about 100 vessels which were specially made for naval operations, and the chiefs of the islands subject to Buganda were required to keep a varying number of their own canoes ready and in a good state of repair at all times. The

remainder of the fleet consisted of fishing and trading vessels, which were called up when required. J. Roscoe says that a force of 100 canoes could be collected in just two or three days. By the late 1870s the Baganda navigators had gained enough confidence to take fleets directly across the lake to the southern shore, and many of the smaller islands were being depopulated by their raids for slaves. Mtesa's aim was to monopolise the slave and ivory trades on the lake.

The Sese Islanders also provided the best navigators, and may have been the forebears of the 'Mamba' clan from which *Gabungas* were traditionally drawn. However, the islanders were timid fighters, and were usually employed as paddlers while Baganda soldiers did the fighting. The French missionary Livinhac, writing in 1889, says that their 'cowardice is proverbial', and that they were only prevented from fleeing by 'terrible threats' from the Baganda commanders of the vessels. In fact the Baganda were never as successful on water as they were on land. Tactically they never progressed beyond using their canoes as troop transports, and remained reluctant to engage in boarding actions.

The Battles of Bumbireh Island, 1876

During his exploration of Lake Victoria in 1876 Stanley had two clashes with the 'pirates' of Bumbireh Island, which, although militarily fairly insignificant, received a lot of publicity at the time. On the first occasion, on 28 April, the explorer landed on the island in his steel boat, the *Lady Alice*, in the hope of obtaining supplies. The Bumbireh tribesmen forcibly dragged the boat up onto the shore and confiscated at least some of its oars to prevent the party leaving; then their chief, Shekka, began negotiations about the payment of *hongo*. That afternoon, seeing a group of 300 armed warriors approaching at a run, Stanley decided that they were planning to attack. He kept them at bay with his elephant gun, while his men hastily relaunched the boat, and then — using either their remaining oars or (according to one of Stanley's somewhat inconsistent accounts of the action) boards pulled from the bottom of the boat — they rowed for the open lake pursued by the Bumbireh warriors in canoes. As the pursuers approached within 100 yds (91.4 m) Stanley again opened fire with his elephant gun, loaded with explosive shells. With four shots he sank two canoes and killed five men, halting the pursuit and enabling the *Lady Alice* to escape. Only Stanley himself had been engaged on his side, and his party had suffered no casualties.



*A Baganda war canoe. Speke describes these vessels as painted with red clay, and propelled by between ten and 30 paddlers. The prows were decorated with the horns of antelopes, between which was fixed a feather plume. (J.H. Speke, *Journal of the Discovery of the Source of the Nile*, 1863)*

On 4 August he returned to Bumbireh in search of revenge, with the assistance of a fleet of Baganda canoes sent by Mtesa. He organised a feint landing at a point where the sun was behind his boats, luring the Bumbireh warriors down to the beach to oppose him. Then he and his Zanzibaris, armed with Snider rifles, opened fire at a range of 100 yds. The enemy quickly took cover in a stand of tall grass, so Stanley closed the range to 50 yds (45.7 m) and continued to fire volleys into the grass. The Bumbireh men replied with arrows and slung stones: Stanley says that they 'slung their stones with better effect than they shot their arrows', but even so only two of his men were wounded by the slingers. When the tribesmen withdrew out of range they were tempted back by another feigned landing, and the process was repeated. Stanley then sailed away, leaving 42 Bumbireh men dead and over 100 wounded. He later claimed that it had been necessary to neutralise the threat to his communications on the lake represented by the 'pirates', who had threatened to prevent him passing their island, but he was widely criticised in Britain for what was seen as an act of unprovoked aggression.

THE BAHIMA

Many of the countries around the shores of Lake Victoria had an unusual ethnic and social structure, which was remarked on by all 19th-century observers. The people here were divided into two distinct classes. The majority were Bantu-speaking farmers, belonging to a variety of different tribes representing the indigenous population, while the rest — between 5–10% in most cases — formed a sort of common aristocracy which lived in separate villages, usually

monopolised the keeping of cattle, and provided the political and most of the military leadership. The Bantu farmers were kept in varying degrees of subservience by their masters, who referred to them as *Bairu*, or 'servants'. The aristocrats belonged to a distinct group usually known as the Bahima, although they also called themselves Batusi or Bachwezi. They dominated the kingdoms of Bunyoro, Toro, Ankole, and Karagwe, and were an important element in several other regions south of Lake Victoria such as Buhaya, Uhha, and Uzinza.

European observers came to the logical conclusion that the Bahima were the descendants of conquerors from elsewhere. According to Speke, 'in these countries the government is in the hands of foreigners, who had invaded and taken possession of them, leaving the agricultural aborigines to till the ground, whilst the junior members of the usurping clans herded cattle'. Unfortunately the Bahima's own traditions were vague about exactly where they had come from, and it proved impossible to learn much about their history, especially since it was taboo for them to mention the names of their dead ancestors. Like many other 19th-century writers, Speke became convinced that the Bahima (or 'Wahuma' as he calls them, using the Swahili version of the name) were the descendants of Abyssinian soldiers, whose commanders had broken away to found independent settlements in lands which they had been sent to conquer. In fact there is little if any solid evidence for this theory, although the Bahima probably did include an element which was descended from Cushite peoples like the Abyssinians. Another element, which provided the ruling dynasty of Bunyoro for several centuries, was a clan called the Babito, who were related to the Luo. However, the Bahima themselves based their sense of superiority on their military prowess and their ownership of wealth in the form of cattle, rather than on any ethnic differences. At one point Speke, frustrated in his enquiries by his subjects' lack of any precise traditions about their origin, complained that in places like Karagwe everyone who herded cattle for a living called themselves Bahima. Although he believed that this reflected confusion on the part of his informants, it may have been much closer to the truth than the theories of outsiders. Modern researchers suggest that the reason for the division between farmers and herdsmen may have been basically economic, and that it was probably in existence long before the arrival of the immigrants, who simply fitted into its upper class because they already possessed cattle. The system described by Speke had certainly been in existence since at least the 16th century, when the Hinda clan, which later provided the ruling families in Ankole and Karagwe, arrived in the area.

Despite this ethnic confusion, explorers claimed that the tall

and pale-skinned 'classic' Bahima could easily be distinguished from their farming subjects by their appearance. They fought with bows and spears, usually carrying two of the latter, one for throwing and one for hand-to-hand fighting. They used long, narrow wooden or hide shields, and habitually smoked long pipes. Despite their formidable military reputation among their fellow Africans it was very rare for the Bahima to attempt to resist Europeans, and most observers were scathing about their actual fighting potential. According to J.F. Cunningham, writing in 1905, they were 'too languid and lethargic' to make good soldiers, 'not the stuff for a rush or a charge'.

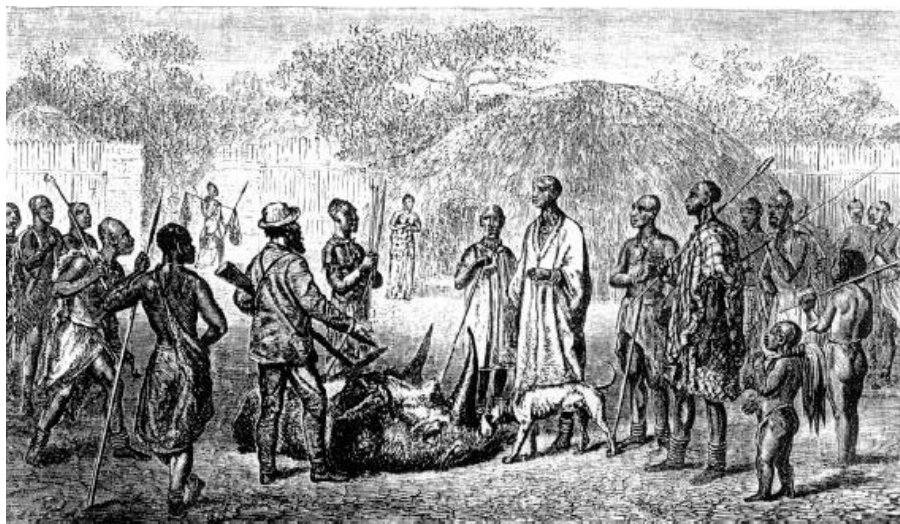
Karagwe

Karagwe was inhabited by a typical Bahima aristocracy, and its Bairu underclass was related to the Haya tribes of the region south of Lake Victoria. According to tradition it had once been part of a much larger Bahima state called Meru, which had also included the now distinct kingdoms of Rwanda and Burundi. In the reign of King Dagara, probably during the 1840s, Karagwe had interceded in a civil war in the neighbouring country of Uzinza, whose inhabitants were a similar mix of Bahima and Haya with the addition of a strong Nyamwezi element. This resulted in the partition of Uzinza, the western half of which, known as Usui, became a vassal state of Karagwe. Dagara's successor, Rumanika, came to the throne early in the 1850s, and was on friendly terms with both the Arabs — who helped him to suppress a revolt in 1853 — and the whites. Karagwe's prosperity was based mainly on its position on the trade route from Tabora to Buganda. However, at the time of Speke's visit in 1861 Usui was under the control of a chief named Suwarora, a 'savage extortioner' who had become rich by robbing caravans or coercing them into paying vast amounts of *hongo*. Speke alleged that as Suwarora's overlord, Rumanika was secretly in league with him, and received a proportion of his ill-gotten gains. In his turn, however, Rumanika was effectively a vassal of Mtesa of Buganda, whose officials kept a close eye on developments in Karagwe and took a further share of the *hongo* for their king. This arrangement led to a diplomatic incident when Speke arrived in Buganda without the loads of wire which he had brought as a present for Mtesa, and which had been extorted from him on the way by Suwarora, only to find an embassy from Usui offering the very same wire as their own tribute!

After Rumanika's death, soon after Stanley's visit in 1876, Karagwe was ruled by a series of short-lived or unpopular kings. Gradually the Baganda extended their influence until the country was little more than a province of Buganda. In 1887, during the reign of

Rumanika's grandson Ndagara, a Baganda army massacred the leaders of an Arab caravan, who had refused to pay them *hongo* on the grounds that they were guests of the king of Karagwe, and Ndagara was helpless to intervene. The Anglo-German agreement of 1890 placed Karagwe in German East Africa, and the country was taken over relatively peacefully by its new colonial masters.

In Speke's day the warriors of Karagwe still relied on their spears and their exceptionally powerful bows, and seem to have regarded guns with awe. The explorer says that the success of the Arab intervention in 1853 was due to their muskets, which the rebels did not dare to face. It has been suggested that the Arabs deliberately prevented the people from acquiring firearms because of the potential risk to the vital trade route if they ever became hostile. Rumanika's 'delight knew no bounds' when Speke gave him a single Colt revolving rifle, but when asked what gifts he would prefer in future, he requested embroidered cloths and mechanical toys instead of guns. 'In warfare', says Speke, 'it is the rule that the Wahinda, or princes, head their own soldiers, and set them the example of courage, when, after firing a few arrows, they throw their bows away, and close at once with their spears and assages'.



*Rumanika, king of Karagwe, and his warriors. Even at this early date (1861) Rumanika appears to have acquired an Arab gown, while his followers wear more traditional Bahima dress. (J.H. Speke, *Journal of the Discovery of the Source of the Nile*, 1863)*

Ankole was the name given by the whites to a kingdom in the south-west of what was to become Uganda, whose native name was more properly pronounced Nkore. Like those of other Bahima states, its inhabitants traced their origin to the semi-mythical Bachwezi who had also allegedly ruled Buganda and Bunyoro. A kingdom called Nkore had certainly been in existence since the 16th century, but it was relatively insignificant until the early 18th, when King Ntare IV inflicted a major defeat on the Banyoro which launched him on a period of expansion. Ankole was the most extreme example in the region of a 'classic' Bahima state, whose population was rigidly divided between the Bahima themselves — here called the Banyankole — and the native farmers, whom the Banyankole referred to as *Baheru*, or 'slaves'. The Bahima provided the royal family and the nobility, while the Baheru, who formed perhaps 90% of the population, were not allowed to own or trade in cattle, and were obliged to perform menial services for their overlords.

The dominance of the Banyankole was based partly on the social status which the possession of cattle implied, and partly on their superior military organisation. Whereas the Baheru lived in scattered villages of no more than 100 households, which constituted their largest political unit, the Banyankole were organised into much larger *ekyika*, or lineage groups, which in the absence of any external threat often raided each other for cattle, and so were permanently on a war footing. The Baheru as a group were therefore in no position to threaten the position of their overlords, although individuals who showed military talents could occasionally be admitted to the ruling class as 'honorary' Bahima. On the whole the system worked well, and there was little friction between the two groups — in part because they lived in their own separate villages, and so in daily life had very little to do with each other.

The king of Ankole was known as the *omugabe*, and was invariably a member of the royal clan of the Bahima, the Hinda. Under him was a group of territorial chiefs, the *bakungu*; although many of these had once been Baheru, by the 19th century almost all of the posts had been given to the king's relatives or other noble Banyankole. In the 1890s there were 22 of these chiefs, all but one of them Bahima, ruling a total of 59,500 households between them. Men of both races also generally acknowledged a sort of feudal overlord, to whom they owed allegiance in return for cattle (technically only on loan in the case of the Baheru). By the middle of the 19th century, however, any military role which this feudal system may once have had had been replaced by a new organisation. A number of standing armies or *emitwe*, derived from former royal regiments, were set up on the frontiers of the kingdom under the command of royal princes, and

supplied with cattle provided by the king. An unknown portion of the rank and file were recruited from the Baheru, but the officers were exclusively Bahima. The *emitwe* owed allegiance exclusively to the king, and were sent out on cattle raids only on his orders. As they were the only organised military units in the country they contributed greatly to the centralisation of power under the *omugabe*. In 1888 many Christian refugees from the civil wars in Buganda settled in Ankole, and King Ntare V recruited them into an additional guard unit, known as the *abangonya*, which was equipped with muskets.

From about 1839 until 1867 Ankole was ruled by King Mutambuka, under whom the *emitwe* system was probably introduced. He expanded the kingdom at the expense of neighbouring tribes to the north and west. Mutambuka was succeeded in 1875 by Ntare V, who took the throne after a long civil war with the help of an army sent by Mtesa of Buganda. Ntare maintained friendly relations with Buganda but frequently campaigned against Bunyoro, from which he seized some territory. In July 1889 came the first contact with Europeans, when Stanley's Emin Pasha Expedition passed through Ankole. Ntare — who was said to have had a superstitious fear of meeting a white man — sent a proxy to make a treaty of blood brotherhood with Stanley, and the expedition departed without conflict.

However, it turned out that the two parties to this treaty had totally misunderstood each other's intentions. Ntare's minister appears to have agreed to a document which transferred the sovereignty of the kingdom to 'Bula Matari', which might have meant either Stanley in person or the Congo Free State of the Belgian King Leopold, of which the explorer was technically an employee. Fortunately neither Stanley nor the Free State authorities ever attempted to make this agreement a reality, because the next European to visit Ankole was F.D. Lugard, in the service of the Imperial British East Africa Company. Again Ntare refused to see him, but in 1891 he made another treaty, accepting the protection of the Company and agreeing to fly the British flag. Lugard marched on towards Bunyoro, leaving the *omugabe* effectively still in full control. During 1891 and 1892, however, epidemics of cattle plague and smallpox seriously weakened Ankole. The economy was heavily dependent on cattle, so a series of campaigns was launched to capture fresh animals to replace the losses. In 1893 an expedition under Prince Igumira attacked Rwanda and returned with thousands of beasts. This triumph made Igumira a national hero, but the campaign was also noteworthy for the role played by Ruhara, a warrior of Baheru origin, whose reconnaissance mission had laid the groundwork for Igumira's success.

The Rwandans retaliated the following year with an invasion of Ankole. They drove Ntare temporarily from his capital at Katete, and

although the *emitwe* were summoned for a counter-attack the enemy were able to escape with most of the disputed cattle. Ankole was now nominally under British protection, and the Rwandans had theoretically invaded British territory from German East Africa, but the British authorities in Uganda decided not to become involved. A rare clash between the Banyankole and a European expedition took place the same year, when the German Captain Langheld insisted on visiting the capital without the king's permission. Ntare's spearmen attacked him, but were beaten off with 35 killed.

After Ntare's death in 1895 the country fell into chaos. Civil conflict continued until 1899, fuelled by a complicated series of succession disputes. Eventually Prince Igumira placed his protégé, Kahaya, on the throne, and secured British support. When the Baganda king Mwanga fled into Ankole in 1897, after a failed revolt against the British, Igumira at first supported him, leading to a brief clash between the Banyankole and British troops in August, but Mwanga's men were quickly defeated and Igumira submitted to British authority. He again declared his independence in August 1900, but was arrested and deported. Some dissident Bahima responded by driving their cattle into German territory, but the country was subdued with only minor skirmishing.

Toro

In contrast to Ankole, the kingdom of Toro was a recent creation, having seceded from Bunyoro in the 1820s. Prince Kaboyo, a son of King Nyakamatura of Bunyoro, had been sent to rule the district, but on finding that his father's rule was unpopular among the local Bahima he proclaimed its independence. Nyakamatura defeated him in battle but did not follow up his victory, allowing Kaboyo to establish himself as king of Toro. The local tribesmen of Busongora, in the south-west of Toro, had made an important contribution to Kaboyo's victory, and were later retained as the core of the royal army. The new kingdom inherited a political and military system virtually identical to that of Bunyoro, but if anything Bahima supremacy was more marked, and the indigenous Batoro and Bakonjo farmers were more rigidly excluded from government than were their counterparts in Bunyoro.

Kaboyo died in the 1850s and a period of civil war ensued. In 1876 the new king, Nyaika, launched a cattle raid against Bunyoro, provoking the Banyoro king Kabarega to invade and reconquer Toro. The ruling family was driven into exile in Ankole and Buganda. The then current claimant to the Toro kingdom, Kasagama, was still living in Buganda in 1891, when Lugard met him and offered to restore him

to the throne as part of his campaign against Kabarega. So it was that when, in July 1891, Lugard's column invaded the Toro province of Busongora from the south, via Ankole, he was accompanied by Kasagama and a number of other Toro exiles. The Banyoro army under Rukara Rwamagigi fled after an ineffective exchange of shots, and Lugard quickly secured the country by building forts at Katwe and Fort Edward, although Rukara Rwamagigi continued a small-scale guerrilla campaign until he was finally driven out in January 1893.

In August that year Kasagama signed a treaty recognising the authority of the IBEA Company and agreeing to prevent the import of firearms, as part of the blockade of Bunyoro. Lugard then marched north to make contact with Emin Pasha's old Sudanese garrison at Kavalli's near Lake Albert, which he recruited for service in Uganda. Some of these troops were left to garrison a line of four forts between Lake Albert and Lake George, which was intended to protect Toro against retaliation from Bunyoro. The Sudanese were supposed to supply themselves by raiding north into Bunyoro, while a British officer was stationed in Toro to make sure that these notoriously undisciplined troops did not decide instead to raid in that direction.

This arrangement was not a success. The garrisons did repel a Banyoro invasion in January 1892, but the Company agent soon died, and the Sudanese embarked on a reign of terror in northern Toro which Kasagama was powerless to prevent. Meanwhile Kasagama's colleague Yafeti Byakweyamba became virtually an independent power in the country, at the head of a band of Christian Baganda refugees. In April 1893 the British virtually abandoned Toro as a result of the IBEA Company's bankruptcy, and for some months it was uncertain whether Queen Victoria's government considered the country worth incorporating formally into the Empire.

The Sudanese garrisons were withdrawn, and although Kasagama was given 200 guns for self-defence his followers were not trained to use them, and in any case hardly any ammunition was provided. The result was that Kabarega attacked and captured his capital, forcing Kasagama and his men to take refuge in the forests on the slopes of the Ruwenzori Mountains. In December 1893, however, the Banyoro troops withdrew in order to face a British attack from Buganda, and Kasagama reoccupied his kingdom. Nevertheless, the people of Toro were still without any real military organisation or proper equipment, and remained at the mercy of raiders from the north until early in 1894, when the British returned with a small column of Sudanese under Major Owen. Thereafter Kasagama continued to rule as a British nominee. In 1895 the commander of the Banyoro royal guard, Rwabu-dongo, defected to the British with 300 followers and was settled in Toro, but the British insisted on disarming

the Banyoro troops, who were therefore not a significant addition to Kasagama's strength. Toro remained totally dependent on British military protection, but fortunately the Sudanese troops stationed in the kingdom remained loyal, and did not join their colleagues in Buganda in the mutiny of 1897.

FIGURES

58. BAGANDA SPEARMAN The national dress of Buganda was the *mbugu* or bark-cloth robe, which was tied over the right shoulder and covered the legs as far as the calves, but left the arms bare. It was allegedly introduced by King Semakulu in the late 18th century, before which the people are said to have gone naked. Illustrations from the 1860s, such as the sketch by Grant on which this figure is based, show the *mbugu* being worn by men of all ranks. It came in various shades of brown, like the cloth of Bunyoro (see the caption to Figure 6); Speke likens it to yellow corduroy, and describes it as hanging stiffly in narrow pleats, as if it had been starched.

Very strict dress regulations applied at Mtesa's court in Speke's day, with death the customary penalty for exposing the legs even accidentally, but it is unlikely that this applied when on campaign. In fact C.T. Wilson, writing of the late 1870s, says that the rank and file did not wear the *mbugu* in battle as it restricted their movements, but instead substituted a loincloth, presumably of the wraparound 'skirt' type, which was also made of bark cloth. This is not borne out by contemporary drawings and descriptions of men on the march, and may only have applied when combat was actually imminent. On the other hand, since several observers remark that bark cloth was 'absolutely useless' when wet, the *mbugu* might, perhaps, have been discarded when it rained (almost a daily occurrence in Buganda), or if a river had to be forded. Hippopotamus hide sandals could also be worn.

Men usually went bareheaded and wore their hair short, although as early as 1862 Speke saw some officials in turbans, 'set off with highly-polished boar-tusks, stick-charms, seeds, beads, or shells'. Lugard suggests that these headdresses might have resembled those still to be seen in his day in Kavirondo (see Figures 85–88), but by the 1890s they were no longer worn. During the civil wars the Muslims distinguished themselves by wearing turbans, while the Christians continued to fight bareheaded. Small charms made of wood or horn were often worn on the upper arms, tied on with strings covered in snake skin. At least in Mtesa's time, warriors painted themselves for battle in stripes of red and white, or red, white, and black. The same king is said to have once ordered every man in Buganda to wear a

single bead on a string round his wrist, on pain of being cut in half, but this seems to have been only a temporary aberration.

The Baganda were traditionally spearmen, who according to Stanley 'exhibit extraordinary skill and knowledge of that deadly weapon'. Spears were light, about 7 ft (2.1 m) long, and tipped with 10-inch (254 mm) iron blades. Harry Johnston remarks that 'sometimes spears were used which were practically pikes fixed on long, stout wooden stems', but he does not say exactly how long these weapons were. This may refer to the special type of spear known as *obujogolo*, which is said to have been invented by Suna II for one of his campaigns, but about which no details are recorded. Descriptions of the actual use of spears in battle are scarce, because by the time that Europeans became regular observers of their wars the gun had largely replaced them. Johnston states that they were not thrown, but an account of Suna's battles against the Basoga recorded by Stanley suggests that they were. Stanley also says that each warrior would carry up to three spears, which tends to support the idea that he might throw at least one or two of them. The general lightness of Baganda military equipment also suggests that skirmishing tactics may once have been more important than hand-to-hand combat.

Late 19th-century observers remark that even when firearms became available those who carried them would often still retain their spears. For example, in 1878 Felkin was provided with an escort of 200 men, of whom 150 had guns, but all of whom carried a shield and two spears. This may suggest a solution to the throwing versus thrusting dilemma, as it is possible that by Johnston's day a single spear was carried purely as a back-up to the gun, which had superseded it as a missile weapon, and so in this case it would be kept in the hand for self-defence at close quarters.

Other traditional weapons — apart from crude wooden clubs — were not generally employed by the Baganda. In fact even swords or daggers were not carried by the ordinary warriors, although a small ivory or wooden-handled knife might be stuck into a waist-belt or an armband on the upper left arm. Bows were regarded by the Baganda themselves as children's toys, although some of the allied contingents in their army did make use of them. The typical Baganda shield was carried by all the spearmen. It was constructed of light wood covered with basket work, and was shaped like an oval with pointed top and bottom, with both sides bent slightly backwards from the centre line. In the middle of the resulting central ridge was a pointed boss made of solid wood or, according to Johnston, occasionally of iron.

By the late 19th century most men of substance had begun to substitute a white cotton garment — either an Arab-style shirt or cut in more traditional *mbugu* fashion — for the traditional bark cloth. As

early as 1875 Stanley saw the officers in charge of Mtesa's war canoes wearing white shirts and turbans. To judge from the frequent references to 'white-robed' Baganda in the wars of the 1890s, white clothing was worn in battle even by many of the rank and file. In fact Colonel Colville says that in the campaign of 1893 against Bunyoro those Baganda who possessed white garments deliberately chose to wear them instead of the less conspicuous *mbugu* in order to impress the enemy with their numbers. Earlier the same year Sir Gerald Portal found the chiefs wearing white cotton, but the ordinary people still in bark cloth.

Fig 58



Fig 59



Fig 60



Fig 61



Chiefs were normally distinguished by a skin cape worn round the shoulders, over the top of the *mbugu*. Bullock, antelope, or white goat hides were popular, with the most highly prized capes made from between 20 and 40 small dark brown antelope skins sewn together. In 1875 Stanley was welcomed by a court official in a white gown, white headdress of cock's feathers, and a white goat-skin mantle, with a crimson robe hanging from his shoulders. It appears, however, that this cape or mantle was a matter of personal preference, and that the material from which it was made did not depend on the rank of the officer concerned. Leopard skins, however, were a more formal mark of chieftainship, and under Mtesa only the heads of clans were allowed to wear them. They could be worn either as a cape over the shoulders or tied around the waist as a sort of apron. Lugard says that the Baganda hunted leopards by driving them out of cover and beating them to death with sticks. This dangerous activity was not only a means of obtaining the coveted skins, but was also a test of individual courage, and useful training in large-scale manoeuvres.

59. KING MTESA c.1862 This figure is based on a drawing in Speke's book showing Mtesa in his traditional garb, which is basically the same as the ordinary *mbugu*. He is bareheaded, and has his hair cut in a style described by Speke as a 'cockscorn'. Around his neck and left arm are rings made of numerous small beads in various colours. A sort of stocking made of similar beads covers each of his lower calves. The explorer says that the king had alternate brass and copper rings on every finger and toe, although these are not evident in the picture. At this time the king already possessed clothing acquired from the Arabs, for Speke later saw him dressed in an Arab turban and an Indian coat with a yellow dhoti underneath. Mtesa was accompanied everywhere by a spear, a shield, and a white dog, which together were the insignia

of Baganda royalty. His father was reported to be very fond of dogs, and the adoption of the animal may have dated from his reign.

60. MTESA c.1875 This figure is taken from an illustration in Stanley's *Through the Dark Continent*, and shows that by the time of the explorer's visit in 1875 Mtesa himself and all his courtiers had adopted Arab fashions. The same picture shows about a dozen men standing behind the king wearing long white Arab gowns, several with black coats worn over them as here. Stanley describes them as dressed and armed like the men of Zanzibar and Oman. The dog no longer appeared as part of the royal regalia, which according to Gordon's emissary Colonel Linant de Bellefonds now consisted of just two spears, one of copper and the other of iron. De Bellefonds, who was at Mtesa's court at the same time as Stanley, describes the king as wearing 'a white caftan fringed with red; he had stockings, slippers, a vest of black cloth embroidered with gold, and a tarboosh with a silver plate on its top'. He carried an Arab sabre with a silver-encrusted ivory hilt, which he had obtained from the Zanzibaris.

On campaign, however, the king still reverted to the traditional style of dress. Stanley describes him on the march to Ingira Island as bareheaded, clad only in a simple *mbugu*-style robe of blue check cloth with a black belt, and with his face painted red. The lack of any insignia of rank was apparently a precaution against assassination, and several of his generals wore outfits which might have been deliberately designed to make them look like the king. One had on a long grey Arab coat, while the admiral leading the fleet wore a white shirt under a crimson jacket 'profusely decorated with gold braid', and a red fez.

A photograph taken by Ernest Gedge around 1890 shows Mtesa's successor Mwanga and a group of his 'chiefs', all of whom are indistinguishable from ordinary Arabs in their dress, with long white gowns and either fezzes or turbans. Felkin and Wilson say that red Turkish slippers had become very popular by that time. European dress was also worn by high-ranking Baganda on occasion. Mwanga greeted Carl Peters in 1890 wearing 'a coat, trousers, and waistcoat of black and white check, which gave him the look of a well-to-do European gentleman in summer costume'. Shortly after Peters' visit, Lugard encountered a Baganda official wearing a European-style uniform of scarlet flannel, with gold braid and a gold-laced fez, with which Peters had presented him. Others among Mwanga's officers wore a variety of cast-off uniforms, including blue British naval ones. Semei Kakunguru also exchanged his Arab dress for European clothes when he accompanied Colville on campaign in 1893, appearing in 'a check shooting jacket and knickerbockers to match, knitted stockings

and shooting boots, the whole surmounted by a turban'.

61 & 62. MTESA'S 'AMAZONS' These female guards were encountered by Stanley in 1875, and his *Through the Dark Continent* includes an engraving from a photograph of them being drilled by Mtesa. They are shown drawn up in a single rank, with Figure 61 at far left. All the others are dressed like Figure 62, in a simple loincloth. The cartridge box at Figure 62's waist was usual for musket-armed Baganda, and has been added for this reconstruction. About half of the figures in Stanley's picture carry guns, the officer and one other woman have what appear to be striped staffs like that of Figure 61, and the rest are armed with spears. Unfortunately, although Stanley describes the physical characteristics of these women with enthusiasm, he tells us little else about them. They may have been one of Mtesa's many fads, and are not recorded as taking part in actual combat, although 'old Sawangansi', the king's father-in-law, did take 'an army of about four hundred women', which may refer to the same unit, on campaign in 1875. It probably did not survive beyond the end of Mtesa's reign in 1884.

Figure 62 is armed with a percussion musket. When Speke arrived in 1862 Mtesa had already been introduced to guns by the Arabs, although he possessed so few that he had to beg a musket from his visitor to make up a guard of honour. Speke's accurate rifle-shooting caused a sensation; the king asked him what magic he used to achieve such results, and refused to believe that it was simply a matter of 'holding the gun straight'. But the Baganda quickly began to accumulate as many firearms as they could obtain, chiefly by trade with the Arabs via Zanzibar.

Fig 62



Fig 63

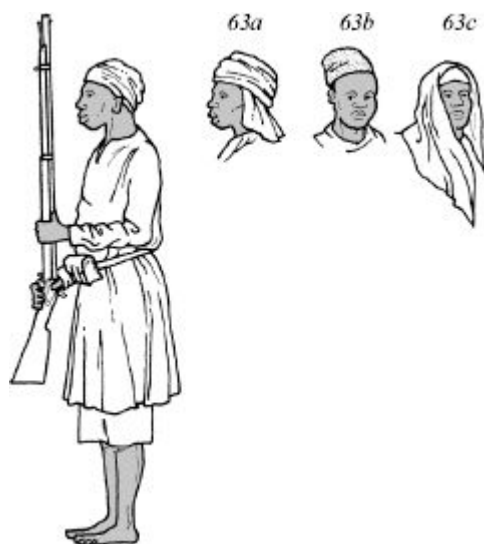


Fig 64



In the mid-1870s Colonel Gordon reported that Mtesa possessed between 800 and 1,000 muskets. At the time of Stanley's visit in 1875 the king's bodyguard comprised 600 musketeers (a figure which presumably included the 'Amazons'), while three years later the Baganda were rumoured to have about 2,000 small arms of all kinds. These are, of course, very small numbers compared to the total manpower of the kingdom, and the spear remained the most important weapon until the end of Mtesa's reign. During the civil wars of the late 1880s, however, Arab and European gun-runners flooded the country with firearms of all kinds, including many up to date breech-loaders. The local guard of honour which greeted Portal at the border in 1893 was equipped with 'at least half a dozen different kinds of rifles ... All, I noticed, had well-filled cartridge belts around their waists.' By the 1890s the Baganda armies had begun to rely almost exclusively on their firearms, although even then about 80% of their soldiers still had only spears.

63. BAGANDA GUARDSMAN 1870s-80s This figure is based on a member of the guard of honour who welcomed Carl Peters to Mwanga's court, but virtually identical figures were described and illustrated by Stanley as early as 1875. He wears a simple turban and a long shirt of Arab style, all in white, but the uniforms of such guard units seem never to have been properly standardised, and numerous minor variations are recorded. Felkin, who saw Mtesa's bodyguard in 1878, records that some men had misunderstood the king's attempt to regulate their costume. He had ordered them to dress in red tunics and white trousers, but some of them had appeared in white tunics and red trousers instead. Surprisingly, the capricious Mtesa allowed them to remain as they were. Linant de Bellefonds was greeted in 1875 by guardsmen at Mtesa's court wearing a uniform consisting of white

turbans 'adorned with monkey skin', white breeches, black shirts with 'red bands' (presumably as a trim at the collars and cuffs), and large red cloaks. The guard of honour which Portal encountered in 1893 was described as 'a curious and motley crowd ... one or two of them were clad in old tunics of English line regiments, others had coats of white cotton, evidently cut and sewn by themselves'. A photograph taken by Lionel Decle in the early 1890s shows a man dressed almost identically to this figure, except that his long shirt extends down to his ankles.

Details 63a–c show alternative types of headgear illustrated by Stanley and Peters. The fez of 63b is shown in Peters' book as a darker colour than the white uniforms, and is presumably red.

64. BAGANDA DRUMS Drums had a number of important functions in the Baganda army. They could be owned only by the king and his leading chiefs, so that a lesser official who received promotion was said to have 'eaten a drum'. Their main role was to summon the troops to arms; every chief who heard a message beaten on a drum had a duty to repeat it, so that such a summons could spread across the country very rapidly. The instruments were also used in battle to transmit signals, encourage the soldiers, and intimidate the enemy. Lugard writes of 'an infinite variety' of different notes, 'distinguishable only to the ear of a native'. 'The drum', he continues, 'serves as the "colours", and its loss is a great disgrace, men rallying round it and dying in heaps in its defence.'

Understandably, therefore, the great royal drums were guarded day and night by three or four men attached to each instrument. The drummers were reliable veterans, whom Lugard refers to as 'grey-headed'. At least on ceremonial occasions, these men sometimes wore artificial beards made of goat hair. The drums themselves were made of wood, and the drumheads of python skin. They came in various sizes, with the very largest ones being reserved for the king. The examples illustrated here are all from a photograph of Mwanga's drums, taken in 1893 by Portal's expedition.

Fig 65

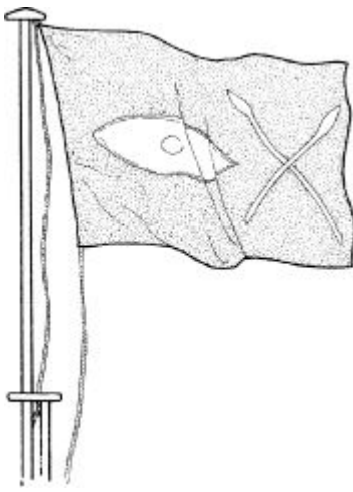
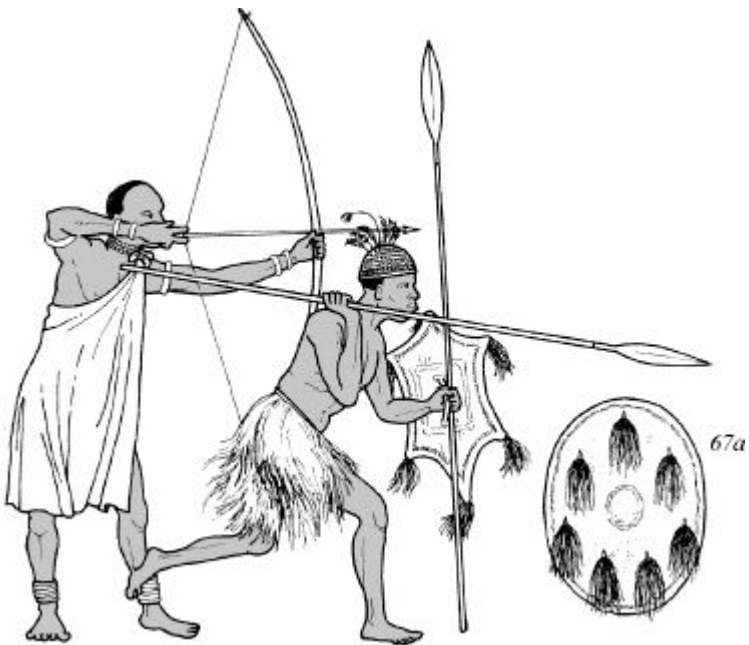


Fig 66 Fig 67



65. BAGANDA WAR FLAG This flag is illustrated by Lugard, who describes it as 'Mtesa's war flag', but indicates that it was still in use in Mwanga's reign. The design represents a white shield and crossed spears on a red ground. As early as 1875 Stanley recorded that the Baganda had adopted 'crimson-and-white barred standards', presumably following the example of the Arabs, and that each

contingent of the army fought under 'the flag of its respective leader'. During the civil wars of the 1880s and 1890s the *Wa-ingresa* and *Wa-fransa* factions often used British and French flags respectively. In 1891 Lugard found the *Katikiro* commanding the combined anti-Muslim faction flying a 'quaint flag' which he had copied from a picture on an IBEA Company treaty form. This commander asked for, and eventually received, a proper Union flag to replace it.

66. BAKEREWE ARCHER The Bakerewe islanders of Lake Victoria had a reputation for piracy and slave-raiding, and according to Speke they were widely feared by the people living on the southern shores. This figure is based on a drawing by Stanley dating from 1875. He wears a Baganda-style *mbugu*, brass rings on his arms and legs, and at least three bead necklaces. The main weapon of the Bakerewe was the bow, although like other tribes living around the shores of the lake they also used slings, and many observers believed that the latter weapon was the more effective. Arrows were poisoned, though perhaps not very effectively; C.T. Wilson was wounded by one, but suffered no long-term ill effects.

67 & 68. BASOGA WARRIORS The day-to-day dress of the Basoga was also the *mbugu*, but they did not wear it in battle. All accounts agree that of all the contingents of the Baganda army, they were the most extravagantly dressed. Figure 67 is taken from an illustration by Speke of 'Colonel' Congow's regiment at a review which Mtesa held in 1862. Speke writes of the Basoga 'with goat or cat skins depending from their girdles, and smeared with war colours according to the taste of each individual; one-half of the body red or black, the other blue, not in regular order — as, for instance, one stocking would be red, the other black, whilst the breeches above would be the opposite colours, and so with the sleeves and waistcoat'. (Of course the terms 'stockings', 'breeches', 'waistcoat', etc, refer only to the painted patterns, as no clothing was worn apart from the skin kilts.)

At least one figure in Speke's picture wears a leopard skin around his waist, like that of Figure 68. Each man carried two spears and this 'fiddle-shaped' shield, adorned with tufts of white goat or black cow hair. Detail 67a is a shield from a drawing by Grant, attributed to the Baganda but more likely to be an alternative Basoga type. Congow's cap is described as 'a magnificent helmet, covered with rich beads of every colour ... surmounted with a plume of crimson feathers, from the centre of which rose a bent stem, tufted with goat-hair'.

In his description of Mtesa's army in 1875, Stanley confirms that the Basoga contingent 'bore the palm for splendour of dress and ornate equipments'. Figure 68 is based mainly on his written account.

‘Snow-white ostrich plumes decorated their heads’, he says, ‘and lion and leopard-skins covered their backs, while their loins were girded with snow-white, long-haired monkey and goat skins; even the staves of their lances were ornamented with feathers and rings of white monkey-skin.’ Most of the smaller feathers were probably those of the grey parrot, which was very common in Busoga and whose grey and red plumage was often traded with the coastal peoples. Bead necklaces were popular, but according to Lugard the Basoga would only accept dark blue beads.

In his expedition diary Stanley elaborated further on the appearance of these warriors, who sported ‘the oddest and most fantastic headdresses I have yet seen, such as young kids stuffed, young leopards and young lions, braves in leopard skins and lions’ manes’. Presumably the lions’ manes would have resembled the ‘busby’ illustrated in figure detail 75c, but it is difficult to visualise exactly how a stuffed goat or lion cub might be mounted on a hat. However, Busoga was a near neighbour of Kavirondo, whose warriors were noted for their equally impractical headgear, so outfits like those of Figures 85–87 might also have been worn.

As well as spears of the type shown here, the Basoga apparently used a variety with a very short handle, which Speke’s men thought looked better suited for digging potatoes than for fighting. They also used slings, ‘with great skill and accuracy’ according to John Roscoe. Carl Peters, writing in 1890, implies that the traditional war costume was then a thing of the past. By that time, he says, the people dressed like the Baganda, in bark cloth or cotton. They had abandoned their spears and shields, and now ‘everyone who wishes to be thought of any account endeavours to procure a rifle’.

69. BUMBIREH ‘PIRATE’ The warriors of Bumbireh Island are shown in an illustration in *Through the Dark Continent* depicting their fight with Stanley in April 1876. This figure is wearing an animal skin kilt similar to that of Figure 68, but is otherwise much less lavishly equipped. His shield appears to be a simple oval made from hide; some figures are shown with a small central boss, like that on Figure 70’s much larger version. No decoration is shown on the shields, although the nearby Sese Islanders are known to have painted theirs with patterns in black, white, and red. Stanley mentions bows and ‘thick, knotty clubs’ as well as spears, and says that the warriors painted their faces black and white.

70. BAGESU WARRIOR This warrior of the Bagesu — a frontier tribe which on occasion supplied auxiliaries to the Baganda army — is depicted in a photograph taken by Roscoe around the end of the 19th century. He appears to be wearing an animal skin tied over one

shoulder, with a ragged loincloth underneath, and he carries a short throwing spear. His most distinctive feature is the enormous shield, which was made of a single piece of thin cow hide, and was thus fairly light despite its size.

71. BAHIMA WARRIOR This figure is based on a warrior of the Bahima, or 'Wahuma', sketched by Captain Grant in Karagwe in 1861. The Bahima were tall and slender in build, and attracted a lot of attention from explorers on account of their pale skins, European features, and aristocratic demeanour. Stanley described those whom he encountered on the shores of Lake Albert in 1889 as wearing the skins of antelopes or goats, like that illustrated in Figure 72, but over the left shoulder instead of the right. In the case of the antelope hides all the hair was scraped off except for a 3–4-inch (76–101 mm) wide border around the edges. The favourite colours of the Bahima, which might be used to dye clothing and paint shields, were black, yellow, and red.

Speke says that the Bahima he met in Uzinza, on the borders of Unyamwezi, wore cow hides dyed black. Here it appears to have been the fashion to wrap these garments around the waist rather than tie them over the shoulder, a practice possibly influenced by the Swahilis. They also wrapped their legs in 'stockings' consisting of 'immense numbers' of rings called *sambo*, made of giraffe tail-hair bound with thin wire. In Karagwe they often shaved their heads, apart from a small tuft at the front. Lion, monkey, and especially leopard skins were worn by chiefs as badges of rank. According to both Speke and Stanley, the Bahima invariably wore some sort of charm against witchcraft around their necks, arms, or waists, and they never travelled without a pair of sandals, although illustrations in most sources show them barefoot. The long black clay pipe was affected by most of the aristocracy.

Rumanika of Karagwe welcomed Speke in 1861 wearing a black Arab gown, a fashion very recently introduced into the country at that time. He was later seen rather more informally wrapped in the hide of a sitatunga antelope, which must have looked quite striking with its pattern of white stripes on a grey-brown or orange-red background. On another occasion he wore a 'tiara' of beads, with a plume of red feathers stuck in the front over his forehead, and a 'fine large white beard' — which must have been artificial — 'set in a stock or band of beads'.



Fig 69



Fig 70



Fig 71



Fig 72



In Karagwe, as well as these large bladed spears, Grant saw what he described as the finest bows he had seen anywhere, '6 feet 2 inches in height, and of immense power'. A few of the princes already had guns, and Speke encouraged the demand for these weapons by presenting King Rumanika with a rhinoceros which he had shot.

72. BANYANKOLE WARRIOR Ankole was very remote from the trade routes and main population centres, and its rulers apparently had a superstitious dread of foreigners, so it was not until the late 1880s that Europeans began to visit the country. Stanley passed through in 1889, and John Roscoe and the naturalist G.F. Scott Elliot provide us with descriptions from the following decade, from which it is clear that the people were still largely unaffected by the outside world. They may have provided a glimpse of what the rest of the Bahima had been like before the arrival of traders from the coast and other foreign influences. The Banyankole dressed only in cow or goat skins, usually left in their natural colours. Most men wore a single short garment, either tied over the right shoulder as shown here or simply flung around the neck, although the chiefs had longer robes which covered the entire body, like that of Figure 7. Princes were distinguished by mantles made of strips of black, white, and red cow hide sewn together. Necklaces made of lions' or leopards' teeth were also popular, as were beads and brass wire ornaments when these became available through trade.

This figure is based on a series of photographs by Roscoe. One shows a group of four warriors, all of whom are dressed and armed similarly, but only one of whom is carrying a shield. This shield is made of basketwork, and is hollowed out behind the boss to allow for a hand grip. It appears to be unpainted. Another picture shows a

collection of weapons, including this decorated quiver with a detachable lid. The most common colours for items like quivers, and perhaps for the shields if they were decorated, were black, white, red, and yellow. Bows and light throwing spears were the usual weapons of the Banyankole. Stanley says that in 1889 some of the bodyguards of the heir to the throne, Prince Uchunku, carried muskets, but repeating rifles were still a novelty to them.

At the very end of the century small guard units may even have adopted uniforms inspired by the askaris of the colonial powers. In neighbouring Toro in 1897 the missionary A.B. Lloyd saw the king's bodyguard 'looking very smart in their white tunics and dark blue putties'.

THE NORTHERN FRONTIER

The region north of Mount Kilimanjaro was dominated by the Rift Valley and the highlands on either side of it. The terrain in the southernmost portion of this territory was mostly open grassy steppe, from which rose a number of isolated, densely forested mountain massifs. This zone eventually became the most popular area for European settlement in the whole of East Africa, but for most of the 19th century it remained virtually unexplored, even though it should have offered a far shorter and easier route to Lake Victoria than the traditional detour through Unyamwezi and Karagwe. The main reason for this neglect was the reputation of its principal inhabitants, a tribe more dreaded than any other in tropical Africa — the Masai.

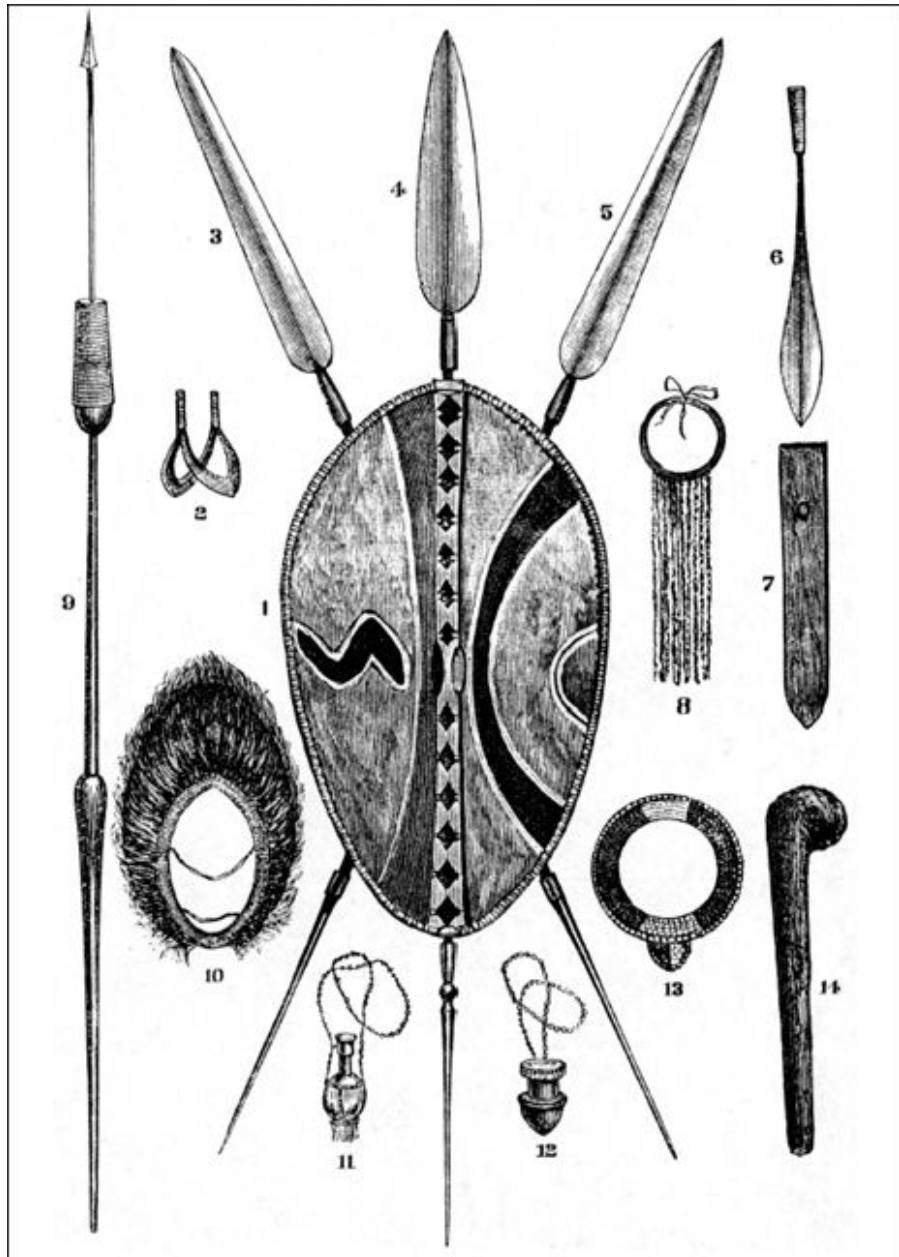
Further north the native peoples were no less warlike, but the increasingly arid climate could not support large numbers of people. Here was the driest region of East Africa, the Chalbi Desert, which cut off the fertile Kenya Highlands from the densely populated plateau of Abyssinia. In this wilderness lay the last of Africa's great lakes to be discovered, Lake Rudolf (now Lake Turkana), which was not seen by a European until 1888. Expeditions into this part of the country often had to fight continual minor skirmishes with the isolated and suspicious tribesmen, and although pitched battles were rare, they invariably suffered great hardships from lack of food and water. This was the main reason why the authority of the British — who on paper had annexed the entire region in 1890 — was not established in many places until early in the 20th century.

THE MASAI

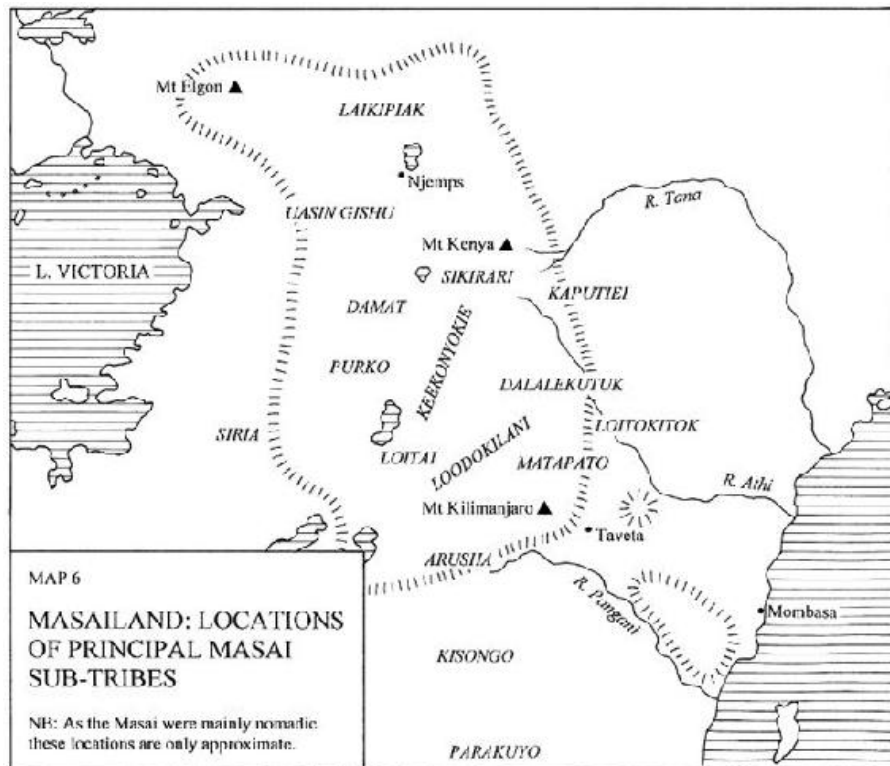
The Masai were unique among the tribes of 19th-century East Africa in the fear which they inspired in Europeans, Arabs, and other Africans alike. Their reputation alone kept the direct route from the coast to Lake Victoria firmly closed until the mid-1880s, forcing caravans to take a long detour far to the south. Charles New, who encountered them in the early 1860s, gives a verdict which may speak for most if not all 19th-century observers: 'Physically they are a splendid people; and for energy, intrepidity and dash they are without their equals in Africa; but they are cruel and remorseless to the last degree.' Both local tradition and linguistic evidence suggest that the Masai had originated in the Upper Nile valley. Their language belongs to the Nilo-Saharan family, and is related to that of the Bari of the southern Sudan. The most popular system of classification regards

them as Plains Nilotes, a grouping which includes other notably warlike cattle-herding peoples like the Karamojong and Turkana. Their own earliest oral tradition places them in Kerio Valley, north-east of Lake Victoria. They probably arrived in what is now Masailand during the 17th century and consolidated their position over the next hundred years or so, replacing or absorbing the previous inhabitants, a people known as the Sirikwa.

Nineteenth-century writers usually considered that there were two major subdivisions of the Masai nation: the Masai proper, and the Kwavi (also referred to as Wakwavi or Wakuafi). The Kwavi were groups of Masai origin which had adopted agriculture, rather than the semi-nomadic, purely livestock-based economy which the true Masai traditionally regarded as an essential part of their identity. Masai traditionalists despised anyone who made a living in any other way than by herding and warfare, and Europeans often picked up this attitude from them, inferring that the farmers were in some way an inferior, 'degraded', and less warlike version of the genuine article. It was only when modern anthropologists began to gain a better understanding of the Masai language that it was realised that the term 'Kwavi' was not the name of a tribe at all, but meant something along the lines of 'other lands'. It may have been used by earlier generations of cattle-herding Masai to refer to other groups which in their eyes fell short of the ideal Masai way of life, but the idea that a coherent Kwavi people ever existed has now been disproved. Harry Johnston pointed out in 1886 that the peoples designated by this term actually described themselves as Masai, and that their enemies in other Masai clans used words such as 'Kwavi' as an insult, to try to deny their claims to kinship. From the point of view of appearance, language, and most aspects of their culture, they would have been indistinguishable from their fellows. Therefore — unless specifically qualified — all the remarks on Masai organisation and warfare below apply equally to both the 'true Masai' and the 'Kwavi'.



*Masai weapons and paraphernalia. The numbers identify the individual items as: 1) shield; 2) horn arm ornament; 3) spears of northern Masai clans; 4) spear of the southern Masai; 6) sword; 7) skin sheath; 8) chain neck ornament; 9) 'Andorobbo elephant spear'; 10) ostrich feather war head-dress; 11) ivory snuff-box; and 12) horn tobacco-box. (J. Thomson, *Through Masai Land*, 1885)*



The Masai were in fact divided into 16 major territorial groups, or clans: Keekonyokie, Kaputiei, Matapato, Dalalekutuk, Loitai, Damat, Loodokilani, Uasin Gishu, Laikipiak, Siria, Purko, Laitaiok, Laitokitok, Kisongo, Parakuyo, and Arusha. Four of these — Kaputiei, Loitai, Purko, and Kisongo — were predominant, and formed the cores of loose, semipermanent power blocs. Groups belonging to any of these 16 clans — and especially the last-named two — might adopt an agricultural lifestyle, whether temporarily or permanently, and so come to be referred to as 'Kwavi'. For this reason other clans sometimes denied that the Parakuyo and Arusha were Masai at all, although they shared the same language and system of organisation.

By the beginning of the 19th century the main phase of Masai territorial expansion was over, but all the clans carried on more or less continuous warfare against each other as well as their non-Masai neighbours. The their people ownership of all the cattle in the world, so it followed that all the beasts now in the possession of others were descended from herds stolen from the Masai. It was therefore not just a quick way of gaining wealth, but almost a religious duty, to try to get them back. Another factor was the Masai age-set system — described in more detail below — which organised the men into age-related groups which proceeded together through a succession of

formal stages during their lives. In their 20s and 30s they formed what was in effect a professional warrior class, the *moran*, whose only employment, and only way of gaining status, was fighting. Naturally the *moran* were always eager to go on the war path, and even though their elders might have been more cautious there was no formal system of government to control the hotheads.

The first detailed European account of the Masai appears in J. Krapf's *Travels, Researches and Missionary Labours of 1860*, and shows that their reputation was already well established by that time: 'When cattle fail them they make raids on the tribes which they know to be in possession of herds. They say that Engai (Heaven) gave them all that exists in the way of cattle and that no other nation ought to possess any ... They are dreaded as warriors, laying all waste with fire and sword, so that the weaker tribes do not venture to resist them in the open field, but leave them in possession of their herds, and seek only to save themselves by the quickest possible flight.'

During the 19th century such raids affected almost the whole of East Africa to some degree. They reached northwards as far as the country of the Suk and Turkana around Lake Rudolf. To the south they struck well beyond the caravan route from Zanzibar to Tabora, even clashing with the Hehe in the highlands south of the Ruaha River. The Masai were not always successful, however, and south of Mount Kilimanjaro a series of calamities had prevented them expanding further in that direction. Joseph Thomson says that in about 1830 'a great war-raid' by the 'Wa-kwafi' into Ugogo met with disaster, 'great numbers' of the warriors being slaughtered, and half a century later they met with another major defeat at the hands of the Hehe. In the west they fought several (unfortunately undocumented) wars with the Baganda, as well as with the Luo and Nandi.

The Masai fighting tactics, however, were best suited to the open country of the high plains, and wherever their enemies could find a refuge in mountainous or forested terrain they usually managed to hold their own. The Chaga of Kilimanjaro, the Kikuyu of Mount Kenya, and the Kamba on the eastern rim of the highlands, not only survived but prospered on the very edge of Masai country thanks to a combination of difficult terrain, fighting skill, and diplomacy. The latter two tribes were the most prominent among the traditional rivals of the Masai, with whom they carried on an almost ritualised form of warfare, with a chivalrous attitude of mutual respect often apparent on both sides.

On the eastern frontier, by contrast, there was little resistance from the unwarlike tribes, and the Masai raiding parties were obstructed only by scattered Zanzibari garrisons and the Indian Ocean itself. J.H. Speke quotes his cook Frij as saying that Seyyid Said had

once sent a Zanzibari army to help the people of the town of Lamu to fight off a Masai invasion. The date is unclear, but it would presumably have been some time in the early 1850s (Said died in October 1856, and had spent the previous two years abroad). Although Frij was allegedly an eyewitness of the ensuing clash, the details which Speke gives are tantalisingly brief: 'The battle lasted only two days, though the Masai brought a thousand spears against the Arabs' cannon.' The implication is perhaps that the Masai were beaten, and even more quickly than might have been expected in view of their numbers.

Another encounter which Speke records between the Masai and the Arabs had a very different outcome. In 1859, 800 *moran* approached the town of Mombasa, which was defended by only 25 Arab and Baluchi matchlockmen. The latter fired a single volley, but were rushed and overwhelmed before they could reload. The Masai then sacked the town before withdrawing inland. Two years before, Burton had described another defeat of the Baluchis at the hands of the Masai. Without Zanzibari assistance the Swahili population of the coast, as well as most of their near neighbours, appear to have been unable to co-ordinate any effective response to Masai raids. According to New, following a great raid in 1858 the Nyika tribe living near the coast gave up keeping livestock and became farmers: 'They have not the heart to feed cattle, as they say they should only be doing it for the Masai.' Thomson says that these raids on the coastal region continued unabated into the 1880s, and 'the very sight of one of their number was quite sufficient to stampede a hundred' of the locals. Thomson was also informed that Masai scouts had been seen at night inside the town of Mombasa itself, spying on caravans about to depart for the interior, although he was inclined to doubt this report, attributing it to the unreasoning terror in which the raiders were held.

It was not until well after the establishment of British and German rule that these incursions finally ceased. As late as 1893 Commander Dundas of the Royal Navy witnessed the typical aftermath of a Masai raid — with no chivalry in evidence on this occasion — in Kikuyuland: 'On our return through the Mbe country, a most harrowing sight presented itself: what only a few days before were prosperous villages, standing amid fields of grain, were now smoking ruins; bodies of old men, women, and children, half-burnt, lay in all directions ... I was informed that the Masai had unexpectedly arrived one morning at dawn, spearing and burning all before them, and carrying off some 250 women, and large herds of cattle.'

Masai were seldom taken as slaves by the Arabs. Their reputation was enough to deter any attempt at slave-raiding, and unlike many other peoples they were not in the habit of selling their

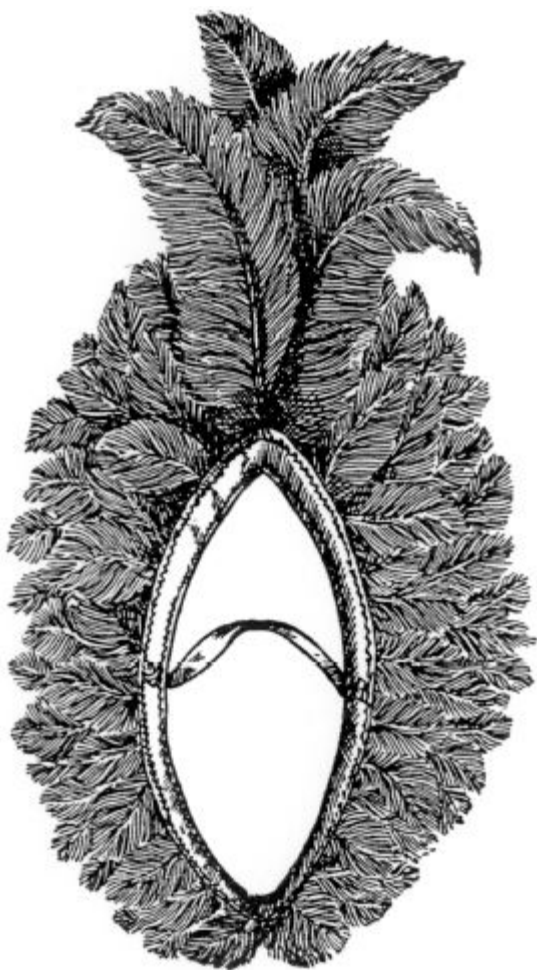
own tribesmen — partly because slavery was not a significant part of their own economy, and partly, no doubt, because so few prisoners were taken in their ferocious civil wars. The women captured in raids were more or less forcibly married to Masai men, however, helping to maintain the population in spite of its enormous losses in battle. Burton says that tribesmen convicted of witchcraft were occasionally sold, but were ‘little prized’ as slaves, despite their intelligence and physical strength. Having been brought up to despise agricultural work, and convinced of their superiority over settled peoples, ‘many of them would rather die under the stick than level themselves with women by using a hoe.’

The civil wars

All this external aggression took place simultaneously with a complicated series of civil wars. The late 18th century and most of the 19th saw an ongoing political turmoil, in which various clans in turn achieved a brief supremacy over at least a part of the Masai ‘nation’, before being defeated by an alliance of their rivals and replaced by another temporary hegemony. In the north the Uasin Gishu and their Loosekelai allies were dominant until about 1840, when the former were defeated by the Laikipiak. The Loosekelai were later crushed by a coalition led by the Purko, who then joined the Laikipiak in a campaign which swept across the Uasin Gishu plateau in the late 1860s. According to Thomson, ‘the opposing parties formed regular camps, and fought pitched battles with great fury, thousands being killed on both sides. The women stood by and watched, while they incited and urged on the combatants in their terrible hand-to-hand encounters.’ The Uasin Gishu were eventually beaten and completely dispersed, the survivors fleeing to take service in Kavirondo as mercenaries. The main beneficiaries of this war were the Nandi, who quickly encroached onto the fertile but now depopulated Uasin Gishu plateau.

Soon afterwards the Laikipiak began to expand southwards, but were opposed by a coalition put together by the most famous character in Masai history — the *laibon*, or prophet, Mbatiany, who first came to prominence about 1864. Around 1875 an alliance of Purko and Kisongo warriors won a decisive victory over the Laikipiak at Il Kileti. Il Kileti was a *manyatta* or warrior camp of the Laikipiak *morán*, but somehow the attackers were able to enter the camp unobserved and assemble their warriors outside the huts before the occupants realised that they were there. This may have been the result of over-confidence, or just inefficiency on the part of the sentries, but the Purko and Kisongo claimed that Mbatiany had cast a spell to put

their enemies to sleep. What followed was more a massacre than a battle: the intruders sounded a horn, and as the Laikipiak warriors emerged from their huts they were speared. Few if any of them survived.



A Masai ostrich-feather headdress. (Mrs M. French-Sheldon, Sultan to Sultan, 1892)

Some authorities, relying on one-sided accounts from other Masai groups, have stated that the Laikipiak were annihilated as a result of this and subsequent defeats in the civil wars. In fact many of them, including their own *laibon* Koikoti Ole Tunai, escaped to the north, where they stole enough cattle to rebuild their herds and continued to wreak havoc among their northern neighbours until the end of the century. Meanwhile the Purko were now the leading power in northern Masailand, and remained so until the colonial era.

In the south, the Kisongo had spearheaded Masai expansion

beyond Kilimanjaro in the 18th century and spread out over the plains of what is now northern Tanzania, while the Loitai moved south-westwards and the Kaputiei and their allies advanced to the south-east. According to Krapf, around the 1840s the Kaputiei, with their Matapato and Loodokilani allies, defeated and 'nearly annihilated' the Loogolala, whose surviving warriors fled further south to join the Parakuyo. In the 1820s the Kisongo began a series of offensives against the Parakuyo which, over the next 60 years, pushed them still further into the south, where they clashed with the Hehe in the 1880s.

The Arusha

The Arusha were an agricultural branch of the Masai, who lived in two separate areas not far from Mount Kilimanjaro: Arusha Chini, on the edge of the plains south of Moshi, and Arusha Juu, further west on Mount Meru. These settlements had been founded early in the 19th century by Parakuyo refugees from the civil war against Kisongo, who had been forced to turn to farming following the loss of their cattle. The same fate befell many of their fellow tribesmen in other areas, but only the Arusha managed to avoid being absorbed by the local farmers and retain their Masai culture. In fact many of the original inhabitants of Mount Meru, the Chaga-speaking Meru tribe, were themselves assimilated and adopted many Masai practices. Despite this, and regardless of the fact that by the end of the century they were actually the most numerous of all the 16 clans, the Arusha were not normally considered to be Masai at all, either by the other clans or by Europeans. The only significant respect in which they differed militarily, however, was that in the 1870s the Arusha began to acquire a small number of guns, which — unlike their pastoral relatives — they used at least to a limited extent in battle.

The Arusha maintained close relations with the Kisongo, with whom they shared initiation rituals, and traded agricultural produce with them for cattle. They frequently fought the Meru and other Chaga tribes, as well as enlisting as mercenaries in the armies of Chaga chiefs like Sina of Kibosho and Mandara of Moshi. In the 1850s they won a series of victories over the Meru, taking over much of their land and gradually absorbing the population. By the 1880s young Meru warriors were voluntarily joining the Arusha age-sets and being initiated as Masai *moran*. At about the same time another wave of refugees from the wars and cattle plagues that were weakening the pastoral clans began to augment the numbers of the Arusha still further.

The area was incorporated into German East Africa in 1890, but it was not until six years later that the first missionaries arrived on

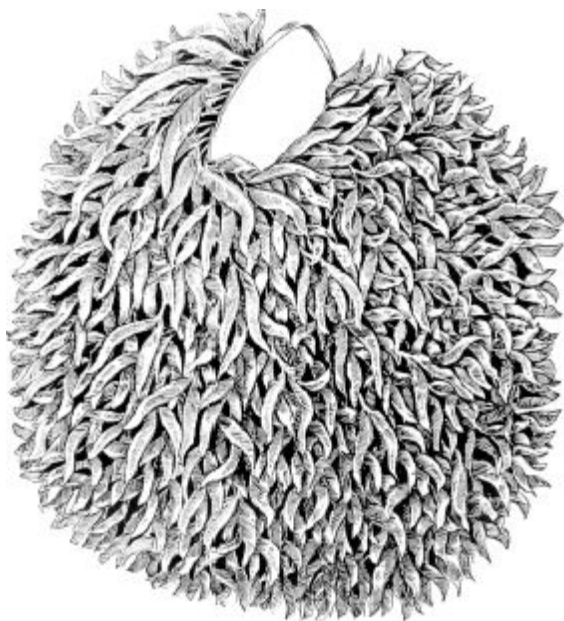
Mount Meru. A group of dissident Arusha and Meru warriors killed them, which led to a punitive expedition from Marangu under Captain Johannes. Accompanied by 6,000 Chaga auxiliaries, Johannes killed 500 Arusha and other Masai *moran*, and systematically looted the country, but Mount Meru was not fully pacified until 1900, when a permanent German post was established there.

Relations with the Arabs and Europeans

The first Arab and Swahili traders had managed to traverse the Masai country as far as Lake Baringo during the 1840s, but this was by far the most dangerous of the three main routes into the interior. Ever since the 1850s it had been accepted by the white exploring community that the direct route from the coast to Lake Victoria was impassable because of the Masai. J.H. Speke suggested that Richard Burton's reluctance to go in search of the Nile sources in 1859 was due to the alarming reports of Masai ferocity which he had gleaned from the Arabs. Speke himself nevertheless approached Uganda by the alternative route from the south in 1861, as did Stanley 14 years later. As late as 1887 Stanley put forward the hostility of the Masai as a reason for mounting his Emin Pasha Relief Expedition via the Congo, rather than by the much shorter route from the east coast. However, opinion was divided over how dangerous the crossing of Masailand really was, with some observers suspecting that the Arab pioneers had exaggerated the risks in order to discourage competitors and keep the lucrative ivory trade with the north for themselves. Some small groups of Swahili traders did continue to make their way to Lake Baringo and beyond — in 1888 Count Teleki met one such party which consisted of only seven men — but there are also numerous reports of caravans of 1,000 or more musketeers being annihilated by the *moran*.

J.M. Hildebrandt reported to the Berlin Geographical Society in 1877 that he had been invited to join a caravan of no fewer than 2,000 ivory traders travelling through Masailand to Lake Victoria, but had declined — luckily for him, as 'a year later I learnt that this very caravan was attacked by the Masai, and that very few of the number escaped ... Generally, during the last two years nearly all the ivory caravans have been destroyed by these savage hordes.' At the beginning of 1877, the same writer was forced to turn back only three days' march from Mount Kenya because 'a short time before my arrival the Wakwafi [probably Laikipiak Masai, whom Thomson also refers to as 'Kwavi'] had to the last man destroyed a caravan of 1,500 armed men'. A decade later, Count Teleki camped at what may have been the site of one of the massacres referred to by Hildebrandt in the mid-1870s — a spot known as Malago Mbaruk, named after a trader

who was killed by the Laikipiak in 1875 or 1876, along with 400 of his men. The slaughter continued until well into the 1880s. Near Lake Elmenteita, en route to Uganda in 1893, Sir Gerald Portal passed the scene of a battle 12 years earlier, at which 300 Swahilis had held off a Masai war party for two days until their ammunition was exhausted. The warriors had then closed in, and only three of the Swahilis escaped. And according to Carl Peters, in 1887 the Masai 'cut down, to the last man, an Arab caravan numbering two thousand guns, laid all the corpses in ranks and rows side by side, and in scorn put each man's gun across his shoulder.' Even those parties which did eventually get through Masailand seldom did so without hard fighting. Thomson was told that the last three caravans to attempt the journey before his own expedition in 1883 had each lost more than 100 men in battle.



Ruff of vulture feathers, worn around the neck by the Masai moran. (Mrs M. French-Sheldon, Sultan to Sultan, 1892)

Nevertheless, as the Reverend J.P. Farler pointed out in 1879, the Masai were not in general hostile to white men, but saved their real hatred for the Arabs. The *moran* seldom killed Europeans, though not necessarily because of fear; as their main motivation for fighting was to acquire cattle or pursue inter-tribal feuds, they had little reason to do so. This tends to confirm the views of some British administrators in the 1890s, who felt that most of the attacks on the Arabs and Swahilis had been provoked by the traders themselves,

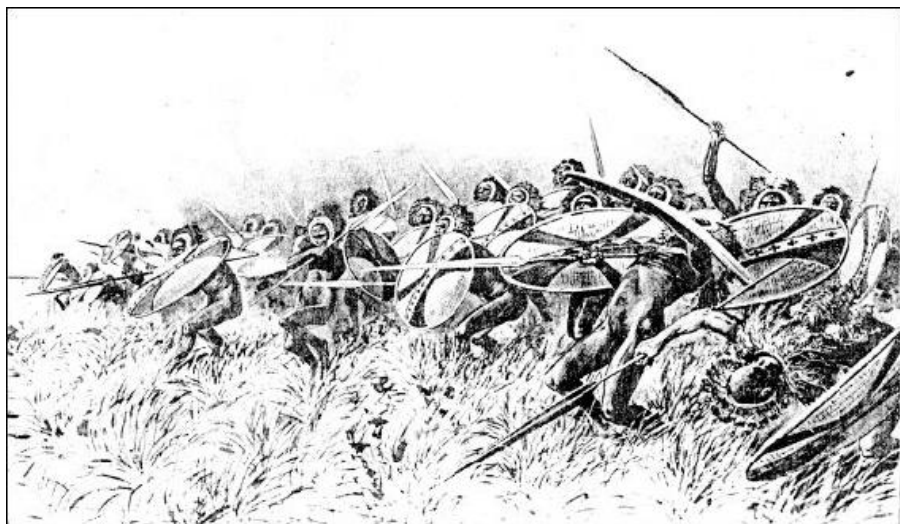
who, believing that their guns would intimidate the *moran*, allowed their men to loot the Masai villages and interfere with their women. A group of Swahili merchants offered to go with Farler through Masailand if he would make up a caravan, but insisted that no Arabs should be taken along, because the warriors would certainly attack them.

In fact it was not until 1883 that the first Europeans set out to cross Masailand. The first to depart was a German explorer, Doctor Fischer. His caravan had a few skirmishes with the Masai but then reached a peace agreement with one group, despite the extortionate demands for *hongo* which nearly bankrupted him. However, near Lake Baringo another band of warriors so terrorised his porters that Fischer was forced to turn back. Later in the same year Joseph Thomson, travelling for much of the way in Fischer's footsteps, made the first successful crossing of the country. Thanks to his outstanding diplomatic skills, and a reputation which he had acquired as a great sorcerer, he got through without having to fight. Nevertheless, groups of truculent warriors continually demanded *hongo* and imposed arbitrary fines, making it clear that they had no fear of the white men's weapons. Thomson later admitted that he had been lucky, as many of the most intransigent bands of *moran* had been away raiding at the time of his visit.

The Battle of Elbejet, 1889

The most significant and best recorded of the battles between the Masai and explorers took place six years later, and seems to have permanently changed the attitude of the Laikipiak at least to modern firearms. In December 1889 the German Emin Pasha Relief Expedition, led by Carl Peters, traversed the Laikipiak Plateau on its way to Buganda. The fighting strength of this expedition was two white men, 21 Somali askaris, and 85 Nyamwezi and Manyema porters, an unknown number of whom were armed. Nine of the Somalis were equipped with repeating rifles, while the other askaris and the armed porters had single-shot breech-loaders. Peters was violently prejudiced against both Africans and the British authorities. He believed that the defiant attitude of the Masai was due to lenient treatment by British explorers like Thomson, and that it was demeaning for a white man to negotiate his passage and pay *hongo*. Therefore he deliberately set out to provoke conflict by firing his gun into the air — knowing that the Masai objected to this, as it frightened their cattle — and finally by shooting some valuable bulls on the absurd pretext that they were attacking his camp. Another incredible allegation was that the *moran*, who never used firearms, had been

trying to steal cartridges from the caravan.



*The charge of the Masai against Carl Peters' expedition at Elbejet, December 1889. Note that the illustrator has shown the warriors' shield patterns as more or less uniform. It seems likely that men of the same district and age-set — who would carry similar shields — would fight together in battle, but no written or photographic source confirms this. (C. Peters, *New Light on Dark Africa*, 1891)*

On these grounds, Peters planned an attack on the hilltop village of Elbejet. He and his German colleague von Tiedemann collected 35 of the askaris and porters and deployed them in a wood at the base of the hill. Peters commanded the right wing of this tiny force, with his Somali headman Hussein Fara leading the centre and von Tiedemann on the left. It appears from later remarks in Peters' book that von Tiedemann was armed with a repeater, while Peters himself carried his double-barrelled 'Express' hunting rifle.

The attack was launched early on a cold morning, when most of the Masai were still asleep. The German flag was carried a few paces in front as the men advanced up the hill in line. Their victims had obviously never expected to be attacked in the heart of their own country, and the single sentry watching over the cattle still did not realise what was happening. He called out to Peters' men to go round the herd rather than risk stampeding the beasts, and by way of reply was shot dead. The sound of firing roused the people in the village, and soon the women and children were fleeing down the far slope of the hill while the men rushed out to counter-attack. Peters describes how he fought a duel against a Masai elder, who shot three arrows at him but missed each time. Peters' first two shots also missed, but the third brought the Masai down. Then the defenders retired, leaving

Peters in possession of Elbejet and more than 2,000 cattle.

Peters prepared to move the rest of his caravan up to this commanding position, but the Masai were by no means routed. They swung round the base of the hill and charged his camp, forcing him to retreat from the village and concentrate his men to defend it. Although Peters does not admit as much, it seems clear from his narrative that he realised that he had lost the initiative, and that it would be impossible to make a prolonged defence, especially in view of his limited supply of ammunition. So he ordered the camp to be struck and commenced a rapid retreat. Peters went on ahead with four men, followed by the porters and livestock, while von Tiedemann and most of the Somalis formed a rearguard. They had been marching for only a few minutes through the forest along the River Gnare Gobit when 'hundreds' of Masai were seen approaching, 'passing tree by tree to get at us'. (Peters refers to the enemy as *moran*, but there must also have been some bow-armed elders with them, as one of his men was killed at this point by an arrow.) Peters and one Somali stood their ground, and kept the enemy at bay for a few minutes with their rapid fire until Hussein Fara and his Somalis came up to join them. Peters remarks that the Masai had never before seen repeating guns, which 'must have appeared to them supernatural'. Several times the attackers hesitated, giving the explorer time to reload, although they very quickly adapted their tactics, advancing in short rushes from tree to tree, 'always with caution, to cover themselves from the bullets'. Meanwhile the expedition's rearguard was also under attack, but held on long enough for the armed porters to deploy into line and support them. In separate incidents, both Peters and von Tiedemann were saved by their askaris at the last moment from warriors who had got within spear-thrust of them, but eventually the column fought its way clear of the forest.



Masai elders propose peace to Peters after the battle at Elbejet. A clump of grass held over the head was the traditional Masai sign of friendship. (C. Peters, New Light on Dark Africa, 1891)

The Masai reluctantly withdrew up the hill of Elbejet — ‘with their faces still turned towards us’, admits Peters — and let them go, but a dangerous march still lay ahead of the expedition. They counted 43 dead Masai, but they had themselves lost seven men, and most of their ammunition had gone. The nine Somalis armed with repeaters had used up 900 rounds between them. Over the next few days Peters led a fighting retreat from the Laikipiak Plateau, shadowed all the way by large bodies of warriors. Two days after the battle at Elbejet the Masai attacked the camp at night. They were only beaten off by firing a salvo of signal rockets, which failed to break their morale as intended but provided the defenders with just enough light to shoot by. Finally the expedition reached safety at Kamasia, where the Arab traders learnt of the death toll among the Laikipiak with satisfaction. ‘That is very fine!’ one remarked to Peters. ‘The white men beat everyone now.’

In fact, from an unbiased perspective, it is far from certain that the encounter had been a victory for Peters. He did bring away some of the Masai cattle, but he had only saved his expedition by a hurried departure from their country. On the retreat from Elbejet he passed

numerous deserted kraals, and he found that many areas which had been densely populated in Thomson's day were now uninhabited. It is obvious that the Laikipiaks had already been fatally weakened by the civil wars and the wave of cattle plagues which was affecting all of Masailand, and that if Peters had launched a similar rash attack only a few years before, his party would probably have been swiftly annihilated. However, as the Masai's first encounter with repeating rifles, this battle seems to have had a lasting significance. Subsequently all the clans showed a marked reluctance to fight the whites, and the shock experienced by the Laikipiak at Elbejet was probably an important factor in this.

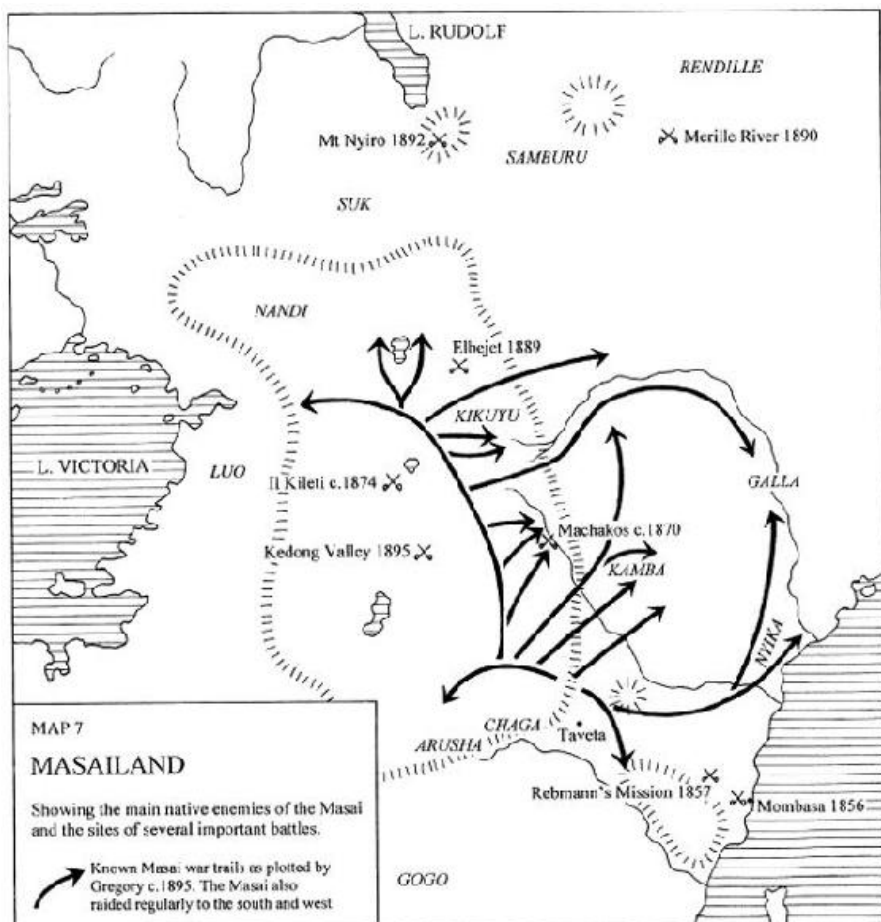
The colonial era

Like many other tribes, the Masai were badly hit by a succession of human and cattle diseases during the 1880s and 1890s. Thomson in 1883 was the first to notice the great mortality of cattle, although at that time the human population of the Laikipiak Plateau was still numerous. A few years later travellers found the area deserted. Portal says that in the early 1890s the Masai were 'no longer the dreaded, all-conquering, and triumphant "bogie" of ten years ago'. They were already slowly recovering their strength, but openly admitted that they did not want to fight the whites, as they had learned to appreciate the power of their guns.

The Masai clans reacted to the loss of their cattle by once more raiding each other, reverting to their old habits now that the unifying influence of Mbatiany (who died in 1890) was removed. This led to the brief Civil War of Morijo in 1892, which pitted the Purko against the Dalalekutuk, and the Damat against the Keekonyukie. Two of Mbatiany's sons, Lenana and Sendeyo, were prominent on opposite sides in this war. The Loitai had been less affected by the smallpox and other epidemics than their neighbours, and began to expand their territory at their expense, until their aggression was stopped by an alliance of the Purko and Kisongo blocs.

Despite this civil strife, by the middle of the 1890s the Masai were unquestionably recovering, and writers at that time still rated them as a serious potential threat to British power in Kenya. J.W. Gregory heard that a group of warriors had planned to attack the Uganda Railway Survey caravan in 1893, but had changed their minds on learning that it had an escort of Sikh soldiers. The same observer described how his expedition dared not light fires at night for fear of attracting the Masai war parties which swarmed across the steppe, and even went so far as to envisage a time when the country would be partitioned between invading Somalis and resurgent Masai. In the

event there were no major clashes between the Masai and the British, although in 1894 some *moran* unsuccessfully attacked the IBEA Company fort at Machakos, which was held by a garrison of loyal Kambas. A more serious war scare briefly followed the notorious 'Kedong Valley massacre' the following year.



The Kedong Valley massacre

This was the closest that the two peoples came to a major confrontation, and it was provoked by the disorderly behaviour of some British and Swahili traders. A supply caravan consisting of 105 Swahilis and about 1,000 Kikuyu porters had been sent out by the British officer in command at Fort Smith under an inexperienced Swahili headman, as no British personnel were available to command it. While passing through the Kedong Valley the Swahilis abducted

some Masai women, provoking an attack in which the Masai *moran* almost wiped out the caravan: the death toll was said to be 98 Swahilis and 920 Kikuyu. Most of the porters had guns, but no effective resistance seems to have been organised, and they were mostly speared as they fled in panic. Some Masai elders tried to protect about 70 Kikuyu who had taken refuge with them, but were unable to prevent the warriors slaughtering them. Andrew Dick, a British trader who was already notorious for provoking confrontations with the local tribes, happened to be in the area and decided to intervene, with the help of three visiting Frenchmen and six askaris provided by the Kikuyu District Officer.

Dick's arrival was too late to help the caravan, and the Frenchmen later alleged that his aim had simply been to take advantage of the state of unrest to steal some cattle for himself. He killed numerous Masai with his rifle, but then became separated from his askaris, and the Frenchmen seem to have remained aloof while the *moran* closed in and speared Dick to death. The official British reaction to the affair was to announce that as both the Swahilis and Dick had provoked the Masai, there was no justification for punishing them. However, several commentators at the time believed that this decision was made less for legal reasons than because the British felt that they were still far too few in numbers to risk a full-scale Masai war.

During the 1890s Masai warriors were recruited by the British in significant numbers, especially for their campaigns against the Kikuyu. In January 1894 there were 300 *moran* — mostly Matapato and Kaputiei refugees from the recent civil wars — attached to the garrison at Fort Smith. By the beginning of 1896 this number had risen to 900, and included the *laibon* Lenana himself, who organised a Masai bodyguard for the British officer commanding the fort, Francis Hall. The following contingents are recorded as having taken part in British field expeditions during the 1890s:

- 87 warriors against Kabete in November 1893.
- 124 warriors against the Kikuyu in June 1894.
- 200 warriors against the Kikuyu in July 1894.
- 800 warriors against the Kamba in November 1895.
- 200 warriors against the Kamasia in May 1897.
- 400 warriors against the Nandi in June 1897.
- 400 warriors against the Nandi in November 1899.

These fought under their own leaders and were usually deployed in a separate column, tasked with driving off the enemy's livestock while

the British askaris attacked frontally. The Masai were not paid, but were allowed to keep most of the looted cattle as a reward for their assistance.

In contrast the Germans preferred to recruit Chaga troops from Mount Kilimanjaro as auxiliaries, and were often on bad terms with the Masai. Mbatiany's son Sendeyo had moved into German East Africa after his dispute with his brother Lenana, and he became the most prominent leader on that side of the border. The Kisongo and allied groups of Masai were caught up in several punitive expeditions in the Pangani Valley in 1891–92, and lost many warriors fighting on the side of the Arusha when they were defeated by the Germans in 1896 and 1900, but on the whole they tried to avoid open conflict. A band of *moran* had held up a column led by Hermann von Wissmann in 1889 and demanded *hongo*, but when this was refused they did not press the issue. Sendeyo took most of his people west to the Serengeti Plains, which at that time were beyond the reach of the German administration, but sporadic fighting continued until 1897, by which time most of the tribesmen had drifted over the border into British East Africa. In 1902 Sendeyo himself crossed the frontier and formally submitted to the pro-British Lenana.

Military organisation

Like other Nilotic peoples, the Masai based their military organisation on the age-set system. The basic principle behind this was that the men were initiated into these sets en masse, at a ceremony which was held about every seven years, so that an entire age group would go through the process together. They were initiated as *moran*, or warriors, around their late teens. Because cattle herding was not labour intensive and the work was easily taken care of by the young boys and older men, it was possible for Masai society to spare the entire warrior age group from economically productive activity, and so for the next 15 years or so they would form what was in effect a professional standing army, before graduating to the status of elders at another mass ceremony.

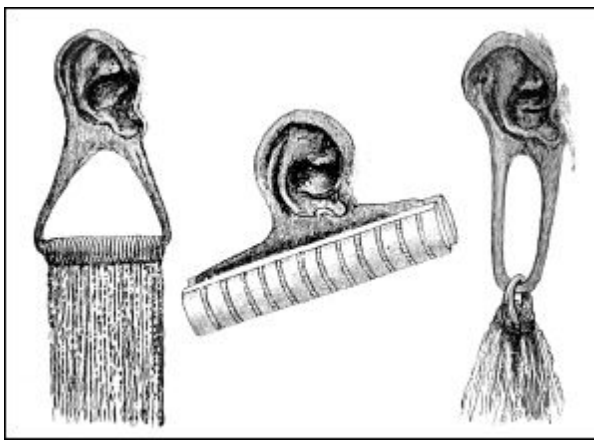


A Masai warrior's iron bell, worn strapped to the thigh. This drawing shows that the elaborate beaded straps associated with 20th-century Masai were already in use by the 1890s. (Mrs M. French-Sheldon, Sultan to Sultan, 1892)

The known age-sets which provided the *moran* during the 19th century, with their approximate dates, were:

~~Til791~~ 1811
~~Me836a26~~
~~Kil821~~ 41
~~Til836~~ (The Rich Ones)
~~Ny851~~ 711 ('Those Who Take For Themselves')
~~Lai866~~ 866 (The Pursuers)
~~T881a~~ 1905
~~T896~~ 1917

The Masai dated past events by the age-set who were warriors at the time, but the initiation of the Talala set in 1881 is the first with a precisely known date. Each of these age-sets was divided into two sections — the 'right hand', or senior group, and the 'left hand', or junior. Each section would take a name: some of those recorded include: *Il-Kupai*, meaning 'The White Swords'; *Il-Kieku*, 'The Long-Bladed Spears'; *Il-Churunye*, 'Those Who Fight By Day'; *Il-Ngarbut*, 'The Gluttons'; and *Il-Meitaroni*, 'The Unconquerables'. Each of these groups was further subdivided into three parts, according to the precise dates on which their *moran* had been circumcised. These subdivisions were known as *Il-Changen-opir*, or 'The Big Ostrich Feathers'; *Il-Tareto*, 'The Helpers'; and *Il-Paringotwa-lang*, or 'Our Swift Runners'. This system could identify each warrior fairly precisely according to seniority. For example, a man born in 1872 and circumcised in 1885 would belong to the 'Swift Runners' of *Il-Ngarbut*, the right-hand section of the Talala age-set. There was also the potential for a fairly comprehensive tactical organisation based on these divisions. It is not clear, however, whether they actually deployed and fought together in battle, or whether territorially-based groupings were more common in practice.



Masai warriors' ear-ornaments. (J. Thomson, Through Masai Land, 1885)

Some of the rules governing their behaviour were relaxed somewhat for the senior warriors, but the juniors at least were not allowed to marry, drink alcohol, smoke, or eat vegetables. They slept in their own warrior camps or *manyattas*, and lived exclusively on beef, blood, and milk, as other foods were believed to make them soft. They were forbidden to carry any kind of missile weapon apart from their clubs, as to do so was thought to encourage caution in combat, rather than the reckless bravery which was so highly prized. Another means of achieving this was the use of a sort of soup made from bark and herbs, which was sometimes drunk before a battle and is said to have combined the effects of amphetamines and cannabis, making the *moran* immune to both fear and fatigue. They developed their fighting skills by brawling among themselves, and by hunting wild animals: novices would start on giraffes, which were hard to kill but not particularly dangerous, before moving on to the most prestigious opponent, the lion. Lions were not only a threat to the cattle which needed to be controlled, but an ideal quarry for warriors wishing to hone their skills and prove their courage. A man who either killed a lion or grasped its tail while it was still alive earned the highest honours, and was entitled to wear the beast's mane as a headdress or carry its tail on his spear on ceremonial occasions.

Sydney Hinde says that the boys who had reached puberty but had not yet been initiated were known as the *selogunia* or 'shaved heads', and formed a class of probationary warriors. They accompanied war parties to gain experience and perform menial tasks for the *moran*, but did not usually fight. There was no prohibition on them using bows, which were traditionally boys' weapons, and many of them presumably did so. Hinde, writing in 1901, adds that 'long ago' the *selogunia* had carried shields with different designs from those

of the *moran*, but that 'now' they used the same equipment, and could not be easily distinguished by their appearance. The elders did not accompany the *moran* on campaign, but they would fight in defence of their kraals and herds when attacked. Unlike the warriors they were allowed to use whatever weapons they wished, and elders are often described as carrying bows.

The highest authorities in Masai society as a whole were the *bejanis*, or civil chiefs, and the hereditary *laibons*, whose role was principally that of diviners and medicine men. An influential *laibon* like Mbatiany might bring together large coalitions of clans, and give some sort of political direction to a large proportion of his people, but the *laibons* do not seem to have had a formal military command function. In fact there was little in the way of a command structure at all, although the age-set system did provide a rough hierarchy, and the advice of respected elders might be sought, though their orders were not binding on the *moran*. The warriors of each *manyatta* elected a spokesman, or *olaigwenan lisirit*, and a ritual leader, or *ol-aunoni*, and they might organise their own raiding parties under these or other temporarily elected leaders. Alternatively, individual warriors who had gained a reputation for success in war might gather around them an informal group of followers. Each camp had a group of *embikas*, picked warriors who acted as a sort of military police to impose rudimentary discipline in camp and on the march. Nevertheless, there appear to have been no formal sanctions preventing the warriors from running away, or going home if they felt like it. In stark contrast to that other great African warrior people, the Zulus, cowards and malingerers were subject to no punishment other than the scorn of their peers.

As the Masai military system was by far the most effective and influential in East Africa, it is worth considering some of the reasons for its success. The usual military advantages of numbers, discipline, and unified command were entirely lacking in their case. The Masai were not a particularly numerous people, as the drought-prone highlands could not support dense populations, and despite the huge area which they occupied they probably never possessed more than 30,000, or at most 50,000, *moran* at any one time. The largest 'army' recorded was a brief gathering of about 9,000 men at Lake Naivasha during the early 1890s, but few campaigns actually involved more than 1,000 warriors. Their lack of numbers was greatly exacerbated by their chronic disunity. Unlike some other noted warrior peoples, they never presented a united front to outside threats, and their clans fought continually amongst themselves even while engaged simultaneously in campaigns against foreigners. In fact their own traditions suggest that during the 19th century the Masai suffered

many more casualties as a result of internecine wars than they did fighting against outsiders.

On the other hand Masai society as a whole possessed tremendous self-confidence, expressed in their beliefs that cattle raising was the only employment which enjoyed any status at all, and that all cattle had been created exclusively for their use. It followed that all other peoples were either hopelessly inferior or, at best, unsuccessful candidates for Masai status who deserved to be pitied. If forced to recognise the fighting prowess of any other tribe they often explained this by laying claim to them as renegade Masai. For example, one anthropologist was informed that the Turkana — a formidable warrior people in their own right — were merely the remnants of the Laikipiak Masai who had fled northwards after the civil wars! Added to this was the age-set system, which provided a standing army of young men with no other employment but war, who could only gain social status by fighting and only become rich by stealing cattle. In these circumstances it is understandable that the warriors regularly organised and undertook raids on their own initiative, without any need for central direction.

Tactics

Another of their strengths was the fact that Masai weaponry imposed on them a very simple tactical system, which enabled them to do without command and control even on the battlefield. Armed only with spear, sword, and club, they had only one possible response to every situation: to charge straight at the enemy. And in hand-to-hand combat the same weaponry made them almost unbeatable. The usual tactic in a pitched battle was for the bravest warriors to form a wedge in the centre, supported by a rearguard and a flank guard on each side, and simply break through the opposing line with a head-on charge. This formation was known as the 'eagle's wing'. Unlike most African armies they did not use drums or other musical instruments in battle; the long spiral horns of the kudu antelope were blown in ceremonies, and may once have been carried into combat, but no eyewitness account describes this (although the surprise attack on the Laikipiak at Il Kileti may have been a rare exception). Instead the warriors intimidated their opponents with chants and war-cries. Ludwig von Hohnel writes of them dashing forward with 'diabolical cries', and Peters describes a 'hyena-like battle-howl'. It was said that the northern clans favoured a wild rush, preceded by a shower of thrown clubs, while the southerners preferred to advance more cautiously, retaining all their weapons for close combat. Although few native opponents could stand up to a Masai charge, a rapid retreat in

case of need was an acknowledged tactic. The northerners were alleged to be more prone to raise the cry of 'Save the warriors by their feet!' and run away if their initial charge failed to break the enemy.

The Masai were contemptuous of muzzle-loading muskets, and only a few of the peripheral farming groups ever adopted them. Burton claimed that before 1857 they had been afraid of guns, but that a victory won in that year by 800 *moran* over 148 Arab and Baluchi matchlockmen had revealed the weakness of such weapons. The Masai 'fled' at the first volley, but when the Arabs rushed forward to round up their cattle the tribesmen rallied and slaughtered them. 'Until this year they have shunned meeting Moslems and musketeers in the field', wrote Burton: 'having won the day, they will, it is feared, repeat the experiment'. In fact it sounds as if the Masai had already understood that the Arabs' guns took a long time to reload, and their 'flight' was probably a ruse designed to tempt the enemy to break formation. They did, however, repeat the experiment, almost always successfully. Peters described their customary tactics when facing a musket-armed enemy: 'The Massai knows how to protect himself from the first shot by throwing himself on the ground, or sheltering himself behind a tree; and long before the muzzle-loader has been made ready for a second discharge, he has come bounding up, to finish the matter with a thrust of his lance ... Generally, in fact, the [Arab] caravans fire their guns once, and then immediately take to flight, whereupon they are regularly massacred to the last man by the swift-footed Massais.'

Peters noted that in the battle at Elbejet in 1889 the warriors also showed great skill in adapting their usual tactics to cope with the rapid fire of breech-loading rifles: 'From tree to tree the Massais advanced, but always with caution, to cover themselves from the bullets. I may say truly, that for the next few minutes I gave up my life and all of us for lost; nevertheless, on noticing the perfect skill of their method of attack, I could not suppress a kind of admiration of my opponents'.

Psychological warfare was also an important part of Masai tactics. The impressive war costume was clearly designed to make the warriors look as frightening as possible, and von Hohnel claims that 'they owe much of the dread in which they are held to their effective get-up'. In fact the same observer considered that much of the Masai's reputation as warriors was based on bluff: 'There is really more pretension and impudence behind the self-consciousness of the "*moran*" than real courage ... Such an apparition strikes terror into the hearts of the natives, and at its approach they flee without coming to blows at all.' Mary French-Sheldon goes even further. She recounts how in 1891 the armed porters of her expedition panicked at the sight of a handful of unarmed pedlars, whom they mistook at a distance for

Masai, but concludes that 'with all their ferocity there is ... a great deal of sham and bluster about the Masai'.

Certainly some explorers had experiences which left them wondering how justified the reputation of the *moran* really was. In 1887 Teleki witnessed two Masai war parties retreating in opposite directions, having mistaken each other for Kikuyu. A warrior who tried to intimidate Mrs French-Sheldon fled when she fired her revolver into the air, leaving his spear behind. But isolated examples of timidity — or perhaps temporary bewilderment in the face of new and unfamiliar weapons — can hardly offset so widely acknowledged a reputation as that of the Masai. The *moran* were under tremendous, if informal, social pressure to conduct themselves bravely, and the overwhelming majority of battle accounts prove that they did so. There was certainly a psychological element to their warfare, but this was exploited as a consequence of their genuine fighting prowess, rather than merely being a substitute for it.

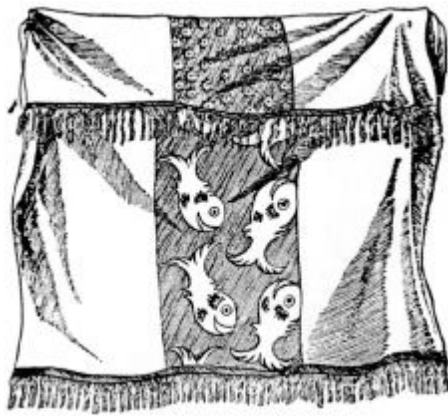
Von Hohnel says that when the *moran* were on the war-path they would cover their spear blades with red fat or wrap them in rags to stop them catching the light. However, several observers commented that war parties found it difficult to conceal their movements because of the flocks of crows and vultures which followed them, anticipating the slaughter of either cattle for a feast or enemies in battle. The total weight of a warrior's weapons and equipment was about 15–16 lbs (6.8–7.3 kg), and with this load, according to Sydney Hinde, he could easily travel 30–50 miles (48–80 km) a day. Rather surprisingly, in view of their lack of any organisation or logistic arrangements — and in contrast to other predatory tribes like the Tuta — the Masai appear to have had an effective medical system, with trained surgeons available to accompany the armies. Hollis records that they claimed to be able to treat gunshot wounds, perform amputations, and even deal with normally fatal conditions like stomach wounds with protruding intestines — the latter probably common in civil conflicts against opponents using the same broad stabbing spears.

Several observers remarked that the division of the spoils after a raid was the cause of yet more conflict. In the absence of any formal system for sharing it out, the *moran* often came to blows over the loot. Joseph Thomson's fictionalised account of the life of a warrior provides the most graphic, if perhaps slightly exaggerated, description: 'The raid was, of course, successful, and our savage friends returned in great glee. On reaching their homes, however, matters had to be squared up, and the spoil divided. So many head of the captured cattle were set apart as the portion of the lybon Mbaratien, who had directed them so well, and whose medicines had

been so potent. Then followed a sanguinary scene over the apportionment of the remainder. There was no attempt at a fair division. The braver men and bullies of the party, consulting only their own desires, took possession of such cattle as pleased them, and dared the rest to come and seize them. The understood rule was that if any warrior could hold his own in single combat against all comers for three days, the cattle were his. And thus began the real fighting of the expedition, revealing sickening sights of savage ferocity. There were more warriors killed over the division of the spoil than in the original capturing of it. To kill a man in this manner was considered all fair and above board. Blood feuds were unknown, a man not being considered worth avenging who could not hold his own life safe. If, however, a man was murdered treacherously, the criminal had to pay forty-nine bullocks.'

THE KIKUYU

The Kikuyu were a Bantu people, strongly influenced by Nilotic tribes like the Masai but not related to them. They appear to have originated on the banks of the River Tana, where in the 16th century they were closely associated with the neighbouring Kamba. Over the next 300 years they gradually drifted north-eastwards, and by the 19th century they were occupying the forested region around Mount Kenya, a territory about 60 miles (97 km) long by 10 miles (16 km) wide, where they practised a mixed farming and cattle-raising lifestyle. By the time the first European observers arrived the Kikuyu had cleared most of the trees for agriculture, but they had left intact a ring of dense forest 'one to two hours' march deep' around the edge of their territory, as a natural defence against invaders. They are traditionally thought of as enemies of the Masai, but in fact they had a long history of peaceful as well as warlike interaction with their pastoral neighbours. Inter-marriage was common, and Kikuyu war gear had been so influenced by the Masai that it was sometimes difficult to tell the two apart. In fact some southern groups of Kikuyu even fought alongside the Kaputiei and other Masai clans against both rival Kikuyu and Masai.



A nebara or cloak as worn by Masai warriors. Made of white cotton with the pattern down the middle in red and white, this is simply a piece of fringed cloth acquired from an Arab trader. Such cloaks could appear in a wide variety of patterns, but red and white were always the preferred colours. (Mrs M. French-Sheldon, Sultan to Sultan, 1892).

The Kikuyu seldom hunted for ivory and did not trade in slaves, while they were themselves too numerous — and too well-protected within their forest refuge — to be easily raided. Therefore they attracted little attention from outsiders until Swahili traders and white explorers began to travel through the region. The first Europeans to have any extensive contact with them were Joseph Thomson in 1883, followed by Teleki and von Hohnel in 1887. These expeditions attempted to trade for supplies, but found the Kikuyu very suspicious — probably because they had recently had experience of aggressive Swahili ivory traders. Thomson says that ‘no caravan has yet been able to penetrate into the heart of the country, so dense are the forests, and so murderous and thievish are its inhabitants. They are anxious for coast ornaments and cloth, and yet defeat their own desires by their utter inability to resist stealing, or the fun of planting a poisoned arrow in the traders’. Thomson managed to avoid serious bloodshed, but Teleki’s expedition was obliged to fight its way through part of Kikuyuland, surviving numerous skirmishes and retaliating by burning villages.



Teleki's first confrontation with the Kikuyu. (L. von Hohnel, Discovery of Lakes Rudolf and Stefanie, 1894)

This set the pattern for subsequent relations between the whites and the Kikuyu. It appears that the main problem was the growing number of caravans and the lack of alternative sources of supply on the open steppe. Kikuyuland was regarded as an essential

reprovisioning place, but the people had insufficient surplus food to meet the demand. They remained very wary of foreigners, and many of the skirmishes which took place were probably due to misunderstandings. In 1890 Lugard, while en route to Buganda, was instructed to make treaties with the Kikuyu on behalf of the Imperial British East Africa Company, and shortly afterwards officials arrived to set up permanent provisioning stations in the area. However, the British authorities were not prepared to undertake the difficult task of pacifying the whole country, and preferred to place Kikuyuland off limits to all outsiders in the hope of avoiding conflict — a policy which meant that the country had to endure more than a decade of indecisive skirmishing instead of a single brief campaign of conquest.

Many observers thought that the Kikuyu warriors attacked the British stations merely as a form of sport, or as a substitute for the former endemic warfare with the Masai. In the early 1890s they twice sacked the IBEA Company's fort at Dagoretti, and in January 1893 the newer and stronger Fort Smith was also besieged by them. This siege was a relatively minor affair; the fort was held for a week by 90 porters and askaris with hardly any ammunition, and was relieved by a force of only 32 askaris from Machakos. The previous Kikuyu chief in that area, Waiyaki, had been deposed in 1892, and his successor Kinyanjui took a more pro-British stance. But the IBEA Company still took the threat very seriously, and by the middle of 1894 had increased the garrison to 400 men. The most serious punitive expedition took place in 1898, by which time the area had been formally incorporated into the British East Africa Protectorate. This was in retaliation for the massacre of a Swahili caravan, but the Kikuyu avoided contact with the expedition altogether, so very little was achieved.

On the whole, however, the hostility of the tribe to the British seems to have been exaggerated. They continued to harass the forts in the area and ambush isolated parties, but most of the attacks appear to have been undertaken by small bands of young warriors with little else to do after the harvest, or in retaliation for theft of supplies by IBEA Company employees. Other tribesmen, particularly in the southern sections, continued to sell food to the British or to take employment as porters. The most prominent pro-British chief in the late 1880s, Waiyaki, had assisted Teleki and even became a blood-brother of Lugard, although he was eventually caught plotting against the British and deported. His main grievance was the refusal of the government to provide him with guns for use against rival chiefs. In 1898 an English adventurer named John Boyes arrived in Kikuyuland illegally, and made himself welcome by taking the side of one village against the warriors of a neighbouring group with whom they were at

war. He found that a few shots from his rifle were enough to drive off the enemy, as firearms were still unknown to them. He settled among the tribe for several years, and although his own description of himself as 'King of the Wa-Kikuyu' was a wild exaggeration, he did help to persuade at least one group to live in peace with the British.

Organisation and tactics

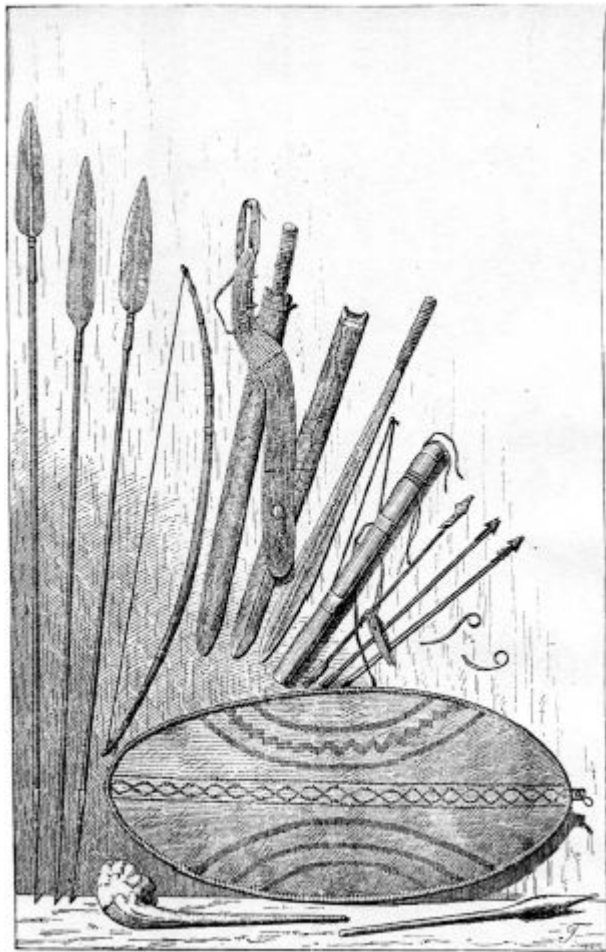
The Kikuyu country was divided into two parts: Kikuyu Mnea west of the River Tana, and Kikuyu Mbe to the east. The people themselves were organised into 13 major clans, but these were not political units and most warriors recognised no higher authority than their village or territorial section chief. Like the Masai, they organised their young men into age-sets, known as *mariika*. From these were recruited both the warriors, or *anake*, and the *njama*, a sort of local police force. Parallel with this was a system of territorial sections. Each section, or *mbari*, was made up of the families inhabiting one of the ridges which radiated southwards from Mount Kenya. Jomo Kenyatta says that the men of each *mariika* formed 'regimental groups' on the battlefield, distinguished by distinctive headgear and shield patterns, although he does not give any further details. Each of the *mariika* also had its own songs and war cries.

Foreign observers often contrasted the Kikuyu *anake* with the war-obsessed Masai *moran*, dismissing the former as 'devoid of the military instinct; as individuals they do not cultivate proficiency in arms.' Nevertheless, they engaged frequently in fighting amongst themselves, and von Hohnel noted in 1887 that most of the adult men he saw had scars inflicted by edged weapons. Their spears, swords, and shields were generally similar to those of the Masai, and so were not ideally suited to fighting in the forests. It is likely that they only became popular after most of the trees had been cleared, and that in earlier times archery had been the favoured tactic. 'In appearance a poor weapon', says one early 20th-century observer of the Kikuyu bow; 'still, in the dense cover it does all that is required of it, and is the true weapon of the people.' The Kikuyu did not acquire guns in significant numbers until well into the 20th century.

An account of the warriors' raiding tactics collected in the 1930s is probably a fairly reliable guide to 19th-century practice. It describes how the frontier between the Kikuyu and the Masai was always the scene of low-level hostilities, with scouts from both sides operating continually to gather information about the location of enemy cattle herds. On the Kikuyu side this information was passed to a war chief known as a *muthigani*, who used it — together with the predictions of diviners — to advise the elders of when and where to

attack. The *muthigani* was also responsible for the elaborate magical preparations which had to be undertaken to ensure the success of a raid, while actual leadership in battle was the job of the more purely military leaders known as *athamaki*, who were selected for their fighting skills.

Each territorial section usually operated independently, and would organise its fighters into three units. The first of these, the *ngerewani* or vanguard, consisted of the fast-running young warriors, whose task it was to take the Masai by surprise and round up their cattle. The rearguard, or *murima*, was composed of older men, and followed close behind in order to intervene if the *ngerewani* was pursued. Finally came the *gitungati*, or reserve, which included the section's best fighters, and was entrusted with the protection of the *muthigani* and his magic charms. (Kenyatta gives a slightly different account, according to which the *ngerewani* was made up of the senior warriors, and the *gitungani* of their juniors. He refers to the *athamaki* as *mothamki wa riika*, and the *muthigani* as *mondo mogo wa ita*. Possibly different Kikuyu groups used differing terminology.)



Kikuyu weapons of the 1880s. The similarity of the swords, spears, and shields to those of the Masai is obvious. (L. von Hohnel, Discovery of Lakes Rudolf and Stefanie, 1894)

Tactics used to delay pursuit included not only the threat of ambush by the rearguard, but also magical methods, such as sprinkling the ground with the burnt remains of small birds known for their timidity — the idea being that this characteristic would be picked up by the Masai as they ran over them. The Kikuyu seldom sought pitched battles, and when they and the Masai warriors encountered one another the affair was sometimes settled by single combat between champions. Warfare between these two peoples had a strongly ritualised, almost ‘chivalric’ flavour, and von Hohnel tells us that the women of both sides came and went in perfect safety even in times of war, and often negotiated truces on behalf of their men. The influence of the supernatural extended to the battlefield itself, and any Kikuyu who killed a man had to undergo an elaborate purification ritual. Nevertheless, a warrior who slew a Masai in hand-to-hand

combat received the highest honours available.

For defence against Masai raids the Kikuyu relied heavily on the protection of their belts of forest, assisted by archery from the dense cover. They also dug camouflaged pits, lined with spikes, in the paths along routes where an attack was expected. When threatened by a well-armed British force they invariably resorted to guerrilla tactics. According to Sir Gerald Portal they 'seldom or never show themselves, or run the risk of a fight in the open, but lie like snakes in the long grass, or in some dense bush within a few yards of the line of march, waiting for a gap in the ranks, or for some incautious porter to stray away, or loiter a few yards behind ... For anyone to wander alone for more than two hundred yards from the stockade was almost certain death.'

THE KAMBA

The Kamba inhabited a broad strip of country north of Mount Kilimanjaro, between the coast and the high plains of Masailand. In the 1890s, according to Lionel Decle, their territory covered about 80,000 square miles (207,200 square km). He gives no estimate of their total numbers, but says that the population of the northern sixth of the country alone was as much as 400,000, which if correct would make them by far the most numerous tribe in the interior of Kenya. They were generally friendly to Europeans, who often wrote of them with admiration. To J.W. Gregory they were 'the bravest, the most enterprising, and the most intelligent' of African tribes. Early in the 19th century the Kamba had expanded south-eastwards towards the Swahili towns on the coast, and before the arrival of the Arabs they had established the first trade routes with the northern interior. They had also been involved in several wars with the coastal peoples, and were long-standing enemies of the Zaramo and their allies, the Doe.

The Kamba were also hereditary enemies of the Masai and, like the Kikuyu, engaged in continual frontier skirmishing with them over the ownership of cattle. A great battle was fought between the two tribes at Machakos 'about a generation' before 1890, therefore probably some time in the early 1860s. Although 2,000 of their warriors were killed, the Kamba were victorious and drove the Masai out of the area. The Galla to the northeast were yet another traditional foe of the Kamba, and in 1889 Peters found the right bank of the upper Tana River depopulated by the continual warfare between these two peoples.

The Kamba had helped the German missionaries Krapf and Rebmann to explore their country as early as the late 1840s and generally continued to welcome whites, although they often avoided

large caravans — probably mistaking them for Swahilis, who they complained stole their cattle and fired on their people as they fled. Undisciplined young Kamba warriors occasionally attacked the IBEA Company's forts in the 1890s, and during the great famine of 1898 they annihilated several of the maintenance gangs working on the Uganda railway in order to steal their rations. These clashes provoked several British punitive expeditions, but hostilities never lasted very long. The first forts in their country were built at Machako's and Dagoretti by Lugard, during his expedition to Uganda in 1890. Three years later Portal and Colville found the Kamba in the vicinity of Machako's to be friendly, and in fact the garrison consisted mainly of Kamba recruits, who are described as 'smart and efficient'. However, the administrator there had no influence over the rest of the tribe, who carried on their warfare with the Masai as they had always done until well into the colonial era.

Organisation and tactics

The Kamba had very little in the way of organisation. They were divided into a large number (Decle says 'thousands') of autonomous villages of no more than 15 huts each, inhabited by members of a single family and controlled by elders known as *wa-zee*. According to Decle there was one man, Mwatu, who was vaguely recognised as 'chief' of the district of Makla, but this was only a courtesy title given to him because of his prowess in war and he possessed no real authority. The district of Kilungu had a long-standing feud with the rest of the tribe, but otherwise villages and larger territorial groups tended to co-operate on an ad hoc basis to form war parties of widely varying size — Portal records one, for example, which was 550 strong, and so must have represented contingents from a large number of villages.

The Kamba were one of the very few peoples who were able to hold their own against the Masai in open country, and even to take the offensive against them. Their favourite tactic was to advance silently, in single file, to the vicinity of a Masai village, and then split into two parties. A larger group would sneak round to the rear of the village and conceal itself; then the other group made a noisy diversionary attack, 'whooping and yelling', on the village's main gate. The best times for this were in darkness or at dawn. The Masai warriors would come out to meet the attackers, while their women and children took the cattle away to the rear, and ran straight into an ambush. Especially in forested or broken terrain the lightly equipped Kamba archers would have an advantage over the Masai spearmen, and whole Masai war parties were sometimes slaughtered. Then the

Kamba would escape with the stolen cattle and slaves to their own villages, which were relatively safe from retaliation as they were usually built on top of steep hills. According to Lugard they always had scouts posted on the hills to watch for Masai raiders, and if an alarm was given the warriors could 'assemble in enormous numbers, and almost instantaneously'.

According to Colonel J.H. Patterson, in about 1897 the Kamba won an important defensive victory against a Masai raiding party which broke into their 'mountain fastnesses' east of Nairobi. The invaders rounded up the Kamba cattle, but were surrounded before they could get clear of the hills. Then, says Patterson, apparently relying on Kamba informants, 'every rock on the sides of the defiles gave security to a Bowman, who rained a shower of arrows on the doomed Masai spearmen as they strove in vain to break through with their spoil. The invaders were slaughtered to a man, and the result of the victory was that the Masai never again attempted a foray among the mountains where the Wakamba dwell.'

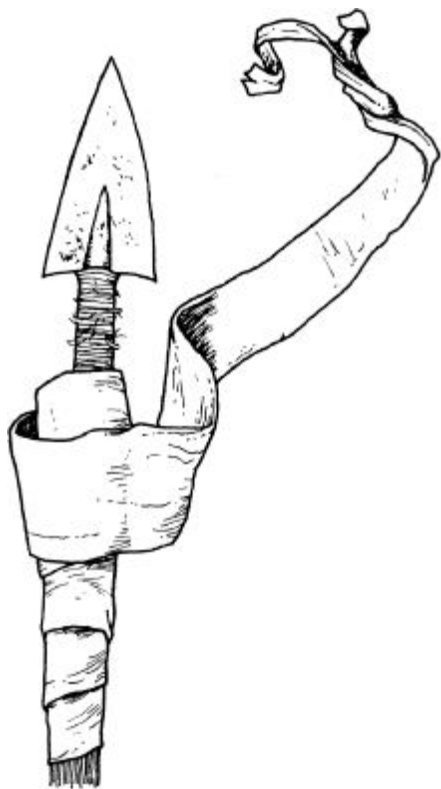
Kamba warriors, who, like those of the Kikuyu, were known as *anake*, were not supposed to be allowed to marry until — either single-handed or as part of a group — they had killed a Masai *moran*. They had to show the ostrich feathers from a Masai head-dress as proof of their claim, but C.W. Hobley, who administered part of the tribe in the colonial period, says that this was unworkable in practice, as a successful warrior would simply give out feathers secretly to his friends. The most prized trophy of all was a Masai spear, and a man who captured one of these was greatly honoured.

THE NYIKA

The Nyika people inhabited the hinterland of Mombasa, between the Kamba and the coast. According to Krapf they were divided into 12 tribes, and numbered between 50,000 and 60,000 in total. In fact the Swahili term *Wa-nyika* means simply 'people of the wilderness', and seems to have been a blanket term for a number of unrelated groups including the Duruma, Giriama, and Digo. Some authorities also include the Segeju among the Nyika. Despite their numbers they were not warlike — 'they never go to war', says Burton — and they were regularly victimised by the Arabs and the Masai. As Speke discovered in 1857, their usual response to a Masai raid was to run away and ask their nominal Swahili overlords at Mombasa for assistance. After a great raid in 1858, according to Charles New, they gave up keeping cattle because this only tempted the Masai to attack them. Uniquely among East African tribes, the Nyika were said to possess an idol which they worshipped as a war god and carried in processions to

inspire the warriors. No foreign observer seems ever to have seen it, but Krapf thought that it was probably a statue of a Christian saint, acquired when the tribesmen joined with the people of Mombasa to drive out the Portuguese in 1729.

Thomson describes the Nyika as not strong or muscular, but 'spare and weather-beaten, as though they had a hard fight with man and nature to get a livelihood'. The men wore only a 'simple loin-cloth' wrapped round the waist, although by the 1880s many of them were adopting items of Arab or European clothing under the influence of missionaries. Mrs French-Sheldon describes some Duruma as wearing their hair bushy and bleached with lime, like the Somalis. They wore a piece of cloth tied over one shoulder, a few blue beads, and animal teeth or vulture quills in their ears. Krapf saw one chief with a bunch of ostrich feathers on his head. The Nyika fought with bows and spatulate *simis* like figure detail 74d, as well as what Portal describes as 'badly made' spears. Burton also mentions clubs, and primitive shields made of 'a flat strip of cowhide doubled or trebled'.



A Kamba arrow. The head was coated with poison, and was wrapped in a strip of hide to prevent the poison drying out. Like many weapons of this type, the head was detachable.

THE NANDI

The Nandi were one of a group of related Nilotic tribes inhabiting the forested hills of the Mount Elgon region, where they may have fled in earlier times to escape the predecessors of the Masai. The Nandi were probably originally hunters, and although by the 19th century they had long ago adopted the cattle herding culture of their neighbours, hunting was still a significant part of their way of life. The name 'Wa-nandi' is in fact a Swahili insult meaning 'cormorants', and refers to their rapacity. The people originally called themselves Chemwal ('cattle raiders'), but by about 1900 had adopted their Swahili nickname.

The Nandi had been in their present home since the 17th century, if not earlier, and warfare with the Masai had been going on almost as long. Some time in the 18th century the Uasin Gishu and Kaputiei Masai had inflicted a severe defeat on the Nandi, but the tables were turned in the 1840s and 1850s when the Uasin Gishu were weakened by a war with their Laikipiak cousins. The first Nandi victory over the Masai was said to have been due to a woman who distracted the enemy by dancing, while her sons drove off their cattle and hid them in the hills. The Nandi then took the offensive and expanded eastwards onto the open plains, having overrun most of the Uasin Gishu Plateau by the 1880s. Some of the Uasin Gishu themselves fled into the Nandi country to escape their Masai enemies; the inhabitants massacred most of them, although one group of Nandi gave sanctuary to the Uasin Gishu *laibon*, Kapuso.

Few outsiders visited the area before the 1880s, although some Arab or Swahili pioneers may have arrived in the 1850s, as the name 'Wa-nandi' was reported by Krapf as early as 1854. The Nandi were not interested in foreign goods, however, and attacked the caravans instead of trading with them. 'Kapchumba', or 'place of the Swahili', became a common place-name in the Nandi country, and was said to commemorate locations where the foreigners had been lured into ambushes by the promise of ivory and then massacred. In 1882 a report to the Royal Geographical Society mentioned 'a tribe called Wananda, never visited on account of their ferocity'. Joseph Thomson was warned about the Nandi a year later, but he skirted the edge of their grazing grounds without making contact. The first Europeans did not visit them until 1895, and initially the warriors looked down on them as 'women', because they wore clothes.

In fact it was the naivety of the Nandi concerning outsiders, combined with their location on the flank of the main route to Uganda, which eventually brought them into conflict with the British authorities. During the 1890s they began to raid the telegraph line

which was being built close to their land, mainly because they valued the wire as ornaments for their women, and later the heavy iron bolts securing the rails of the Uganda Railway were stolen for use as weapons. Hollis, writing in 1909, lays the blame for the first outbreak of hostilities in 1895 on the provocative behaviour of two British traders, Andrew Dick and Peter West. Dick beat two Nandi for allegedly stealing cattle, in retaliation for which the tribe slaughtered a mail caravan and attacked West's camp at night, killing him and stealing his guns. Dick escaped their revenge, only to be speared by the Masai after the Kedong Valley massacre.



This illustration of an incident from the Nandi campaign of November 1895 depicts a Nandi charge against a company of Sudanese askaris in British service. Unlike many over-dramatised battle pictures of the time, this one probably gives a fair impression of the fight, in which the attackers got within 30 yds (27 m) of the British line before being broken. (Lieutenant S.

Vandeleur, Campaigning on the Upper Nile and Niger, 18

The first British punitive expedition against the Nandi took place soon afterwards, at the end of 1895. It took the field as several independent company-sized columns with orders to quarter the country and round up the cattle. Lieutenant Vandeleur, who fought in the campaign, provides an eyewitness account of the Nandi battle tactics. On the banks of the Kimonde River his company of Sudanese was attacked by about 500 warriors, 'apparently excellently organised, and formed in three sides of a square, above which a dense thicket of

long-bladed spears flashed in the sunlight'. Wheeling and charging in unison, they caught and wiped out a detachment of 14 men, then got to within 30 yds (27 m) of the main Sudanese line before being broken by rifle and Maxim fire. Vandeleur believed that had his troops been surprised while in column of march they would have been annihilated, and commented that 'this charge was a revelation to us, after fighting the cautious Wanyoro ... and at once accounted for the warlike reputation ... which the Wa-Nandi possessed'.

Nevertheless, the Nandi had already learned from their defeat, and two days later they attacked the British camp at night. This time they reached the thorn fence surrounding it, but were unable to scale it in the face of the Sudanese rifle fire and were again repulsed. Subsequently they contented themselves with shadowing the column, killing stragglers and rolling down boulders from cliffs above the track. The British sacked a few villages, drove off the Nandi cattle, and proclaimed the area pacified. In fact three more expeditions were required, in 1900, 1903, and 1905, before the tribe admitted defeat, making the Nandi Wars as a whole the most serious opposition which the British encountered in Kenya.

Organisation and tactics

Despite their small numbers the Nandi had long had a formidable reputation as fighters, and tended to regard less warlike peoples with contempt. According to the anthropologist Huntingford they regarded warfare as 'a form of sport, the only kind on a large scale that they understood, which gave them something real and exciting to live for'. Traditional Nandi warfare consisted of small scale raids for cattle and prisoners. After the seizure of the Uasin Gishu grazing grounds they showed no further interest in territorial conquest, and they did not keep slaves. Prisoners of war were usually ransomed for cattle, but captured Masai warriors were respected for their fighting abilities and were often adopted into the tribe.

An important strength of the Nandi military system was the role of the *orkoiik* (singular *orkoiyot*), part prophets and part war leaders, who were directly inspired by Kapuso and other Masai *laibons*. The *orkoiik* first came to prominence in the mid-19th century. The office was hereditary within a single family, which was probably of Masai origin, and the whole Nandi people recognised the authority of a single *orkoiyot*, or at most two at any one time. They were feared and respected for their magical powers, and made use of this fact to impose an unprecedented degree of cohesion on the tribe. This may be one reason why, despite their lack of formal political unity (and unlike the Masai), the Nandi are never known to have fought among

themselves. Known *orkoiik* during the 19th century were:

Kipokoi and Kipsokon (joint), c.1870.

Marasoi and Arap Kipsokon (joint), c.1870s.

Turukat and Kinekat (joint), c.1880s.

Kipterer.

Kimnyole (executed 1890).

Koitalel (shot by the British 1905).

Based on early 20th-century statistics the total fighting strength of the Nandi has been estimated at around 4,700, but the population was very fragmented by the wooded and rocky nature of their country and no united force of anything like this size ever took the field. Like the Masai, they were organised into age-sets, with the younger adult male sets providing the warriors. Every seven years or so a ceremony was held at which responsibility for the defence of the tribe was formally handed over from one age-set to another. The main political subdivision of Nandi society was the district or *pororiet*, of which there were 15, each ruled by a council of elders. Each *pororiet* raised its own regiment of warriors, which was called a *luket* (meaning literally 'a raid'), and undertook its own military operations, either alone or in alliance with other districts.

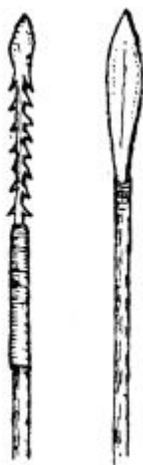
It was customary to first ask the *orkoiyot* for permission to send out a raiding party. If this was granted a kudu horn would be blown to summon the warriors; the authority of the *orkoiyot* was symbolised by a club which he had blessed, and which was carried at the head of the army. An *orkoiyot* was sometimes referred to as *kipsetmet*, or 'one whose head goes to war'. This was an allusion to the idea that he could detach his head from his body, and send it to keep an eye on the performance of the warriors in battle — a belief which was said to be an important factor in maintaining discipline. A man who showed cowardice could also be beaten or even killed by his fellows.

Each *luket* was divided into a varying number of sub-units, or *siritaiik*, of between 20 and 50 men each, depending on the size of the *pororiet*. The leaders of each of the individual *siritaiik* held the title of *kirkik*, or 'bull'. Parallel to the *pororiet* organisation was a system of 17 clans or families, each of which was associated with a particular totem animal. Some clans had traditional military roles, although it is not clear how rigidly these were adhered to in practice. For example, the members of the lion clan always deployed on the right wing in battle. The hyena clan was responsible for providing a rearguard to cover a retreat if this became necessary, and for blocking the tracks through the forest to frustrate an invader.

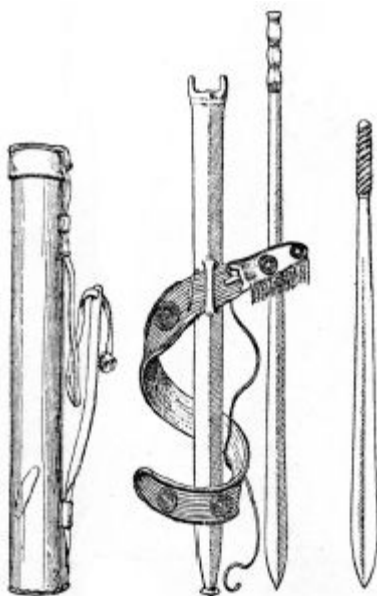
Raids were carried out against enemies living as far as 100 miles (160 km) from Nandi territory, and — just as they are today — the inhabitants of the Nandi country were famous for their speed and stamina as longdistance runners. Other Nandi, as well as the closely related Kipsigis, were off-limits to raiding parties, but other related peoples such as the Suk, Sapei, and Terik, who were less well organised militarily, were frequently targeted. So were the Luo, the Masai, and the Bantu tribes of Kavirondo. Not all of these raids were successful, and a major defeat was sustained in 1890 when an army of 500 warriors was ambushed in Kavirondo, leaving only two survivors. The *orkoiyot* Kimnyole received the blame for this and was put to death by his fellow tribesmen. The people of one small *pororiet* of only 50 warriors, Cheptol, were notorious for their pride and over-confidence. Tradition recalled how they were so certain of success before one raid that they slaughtered and ate all their cattle in a huge feast, only to go hungry when they had to return home without capturing any. On the other hand, the reputation of the Nandi and the inaccessible terrain of their homeland made them virtually immune to counter-raids. Before the arrival of the British, only the Masai are known to have undertaken offensive operations against them.

The preferred time for campaigning was in the dry season, which began in October. Traditional raiding tactics emphasised surprise. A war party would send out scouts in advance to determine the location of the enemy warriors and their cattle, and the best approach and escape routes. When the patrol returned the main body was mustered by sounding the kudu horn, but the approach to the enemy village was made stealthily and in silence, in single file, and making use of cover. Ideally their scouts would have located a spot where they could deploy unobserved within easy reach of the target, in which case the Nandi preferred to wait until after dark before attacking. The war party would be split into three groups; one had the task of creating a diversion, while the second broke into the enclosure where the cattle were kept, and brought them out. Most of the Nandi's neighbours had learned to keep their animals inside kraals protected by thorn hedges or mud walls, so this task often involved demolishing a section of wall or hedge, which was likely to alert the enemy. This second party would then deploy to cover the withdrawal while the third group, consisting of the least experienced warriors, drove the cattle away. Unlike the Masai, the Nandi distributed their loot according to an orderly system. Every warrior would normally receive at least one cow, although if there were not enough to go round the *orkoiyot* and the senior warriors got their shares first. Then a victory dance was held, after which every warrior who had killed a man had to undergo four days of ritual purification. It was also customary to

drink the blood of enemies washed from their spear blades, in order to give the killers courage.



*Nandi arrowheads collected by Hollis around the turn of the 20th century. (A.C. Hollis, *The Nandi*, 1909)*



*Nandi quiver, scabbard, and swords. (A.C. Hollis, *The Nandi*, 1909)*

Most of the border between Nandi and Masai country was naturally protected by rocky hills or fast-flowing rivers, which effectively kept out Masai raids because of the difficulty of getting stolen cattle back across these obstacles. However, in the east,

between the River Mutwot and the Tindiret Forest, there was a stretch of open grassland about 12 miles (19 km) wide, which provided an easy route for the Uasin Gishu and other Masai raiders. The Nandi had a series of look-out positions scattered across this gap on high ground, each more or less permanently manned by two or three warriors. The sentries would blow kudu horns to give warning of an invasion, giving the people time to hide their cattle in the forest. Huntingford records a tradition that the Nandi did not use protected kraals like their neighbours and did not fight in defence of their herds, but were usually able to drive them away to safe hideouts before the enemy could reach them. As the Uasin Gishu declined in strength the Nandi gradually took control of this strategic gap, and the last Masai raid in the area appears to have taken place around 1880.

THE KIPSIGIS

The Kipsigis inhabited the forested mountains south of the Nandi country, where they had migrated from the Lake Baringo region early in the century. They were closely related to the Nandi, and like them they waged war mainly for cattle. However, they were much more numerous than the Nandi, although no population figures exist earlier than the 1930s. During the 19th century they regularly attacked virtually all of the nearby tribes, although they did not raid the Nandi themselves, and they appear to have fought mostly on the defensive against the Masai. Their main victims were the Luo and Kisii who lived to the west, between the mountains and Lake Victoria. They had no contact with Europeans until 1899, when the British built a road through their country.

Organisation and tactics

Like the Masai the Kipsigis had prophets known as *laibons*, who were actually said to have originally been Masai exiles. Their main role was to predict the outcome of raids, in return for which the successful rustlers rewarded them with cattle. There were four major territorial districts, or *emotinwek*, among the Kipsigis — Peelkut, Waldai, Puret, and Sot — but by the late 19th century, although these districts might plan and carry out offensive operations independently, they did not maintain their own military units. Instead each male Kipsigis was enrolled into one of four regiments, or *puriosiek* (singular *puriet*): the Kipkayge, the Ngetunyo, the Kasanet, and the Kebeni. These cut across territorial divisions, and each would include men from a mixture of districts and clans. In another parallel with Masai practice, Kipsigis men belonged to age-sets, each of which were initiated in succession, first as warriors and then as elders. They usually entered the warrior

age-grade when they were about 20, and remained there for 15–20 years before progressing to elder status.

At one time the *puriosiek* had apparently fought as tactical units, but some time before 1870 an army made up of the Kipkayge and Kasanet regiments had been heavily defeated by the Kisii at the Battle of Ngoino. This defeat was blamed on the fact that the two regiments had not co-operated during the battle, but instead had competed with each other to seize the enemy's herds. Thereafter a completely different system was adopted, in which all four regiments were required to contribute to every campaign or raiding party. An army, or *luget*, was now divided into four companies known as *kwanaik* (singular *kwanet*), each of which included men from all the regiments.

The actual procedure for raising an army depended on whether it was intended for an offensive or a defensive campaign. Each of the *emotinwek* usually despatched its own raiding parties, for which the village chiefs would pick 50 or 60 warriors from each regiment — which implies that the usual size of a Kipsigis 'army' would be between 200 and 240 men. Careful attention was paid to the selection of the war chiefs, or *kiptaynek*, who would command the army and its constituent *kwanaik*. Promising warriors were questioned by the chiefs on their knowledge of tactics and omens, as well as being assessed on their reputation for courage, before these appointments were decided upon. In defence, however, these elaborate arrangements were dispensed with, and the war chiefs of a group of threatened villages would muster the warriors living in the vicinity without regard to the regimental system.

When a raid was sent out it was preceded by spies who located the enemy cattle herds and assessed the strength of their defenders, sometimes keeping the target under observation for up to a month. The *luget* itself was always accompanied by nine scouts, or *sogoldaik* (the number nine having symbolic importance to the Kipsigis). In daylight the army marched in single file, keeping if possible to the thick forest which grew along the rivers. Then, on approaching the enemy kraal, it would divide into its four *kwanaik* for a night advance, and attack just before dawn. Experienced warriors armed with spears, swords, and clubs would lead the assault, while archers occupied commanding positions chosen in advance by the spies, in order to provide support to the first wave. A detached unit called a *lumwet* was posted in the rear to intercept any enemy reinforcements arriving from neighbouring villages. Novices and older men waited at the rear to drive off the captured beasts. When returning home with captured cattle, the army would march in a hollow square with the beasts in the middle, attended by the novices, and the best warriors forming the

front and rear.

KAVIRONDO AND ITS NEIGHBOURS

THE LUO

The Luo were the main non-Bantu people of the Kavirondo region on the north-eastern shore of Lake Victoria. Physically they resembled their Bantu neighbours, but their origin was quite different. They were the most southerly representatives of a great migration of cattle-herders which had begun in the Sudan in the 15th century, and were related to other Nilotic peoples such as the Dinka and Shilluk of the Sudan, and the Babito and Lango of Bunyoro. The Luo lacked any form of centralised government, but lived in autonomous villages under chiefs known as *ruoths*. They had a long tradition of assimilating foreigners, with the result that it was often difficult to decide who was a Luo and who was not.

By the 19th century they lived mainly by farming and fishing, but they had originally been herdsmen, and most of their wars still took the form of raids for cattle. They were noted for their chivalrous attitude to warfare, their fondness for single combat between champions, and for a deep-rooted ideology which emphasised personal honour, unflinching courage, stoical self-control, and contempt of death. Social status was derived partly from family lineage and partly from wealth in cattle and skill in war. The great hero of the Luo people was Okore Oganda, who died some time in the late 1870s. His fame was due mainly to his personal fighting prowess, and it was said that on several occasions he beat ten enemies single-handed. His nickname was 'Chieng', or 'the sun', and he had a band of followers known as the 'fighting he-goats'. He was eventually treacherously killed from ambush with a poisoned arrow.

The 1890 agreement between Britain and Germany divided the as yet unadministered Luo country between these two powers. True to their traditions of assimilating newcomers, the larger northern group of the Luo welcomed the British in the 1890s, although they carried out raids into German East Africa for the rest of the decade until the Germans built border posts to keep them out. In 1898 a German column under Captain Schlobach marched to the shore of Lake Victoria, where the Kuria people were complaining of Luo raids. On the way Schlobach stormed a hilltop fort held by the hostile Sweta (a group which one source implies was related to the Nyamwezi, but the name is the same as that of one of the sub-tribes of the nearby Kisii — see below). Shortly afterwards the Germans met a Luo war party marching south, but the warriors had already heard of their victory

over the Sweta, and so were eager to make peace.

The Luo *ruoths* were purely civil chiefs, but in addition there were three types of military leader. One, the *ogaye* or *osumba*, was subordinate to the *ruoth* and was responsible for discipline among the warriors in battle. He did not fight, but carried a stick with which he beat cowards. The *jabilo* was a diviner, who accompanied the army mainly for ritual purposes but may also have had a command or disciplinary role. A man who actually led the warriors into combat was known as a *thuon*. This was said to be not so much a formal rank as a title given as a reward for courage, although another tradition, which states that if a *thuon* was killed his followers immediately went home, suggests that he may have had a recognised commanding role over a specific group of warriors. The *thuons* were distinguished in battle by conspicuous ostrich-feather headdresses.

THE KISII

The Kisii were a Bantu-speaking people living at the south-western edge of the Kenya Highlands on the shore of Lake Victoria, where they had been driven from the north by the Luo in the 18th century. They were never united, but consisted of several clans named after animal totems — notably the ‘Bassi’ (Zebra totem), ‘Mugirango’ (Leopard), ‘Wanjare’ (Hippopotamus), and ‘Sweta’ (Baboon totem). They were excellent iron workers, and even exported weapons to the Luo. They had only occasional contacts with Arab traders before 1900, and the British administration did not arrive until 1904, but this small and isolated tribe deserve mention because of their remarkable successes in battle against their stronger neighbours.

At the beginning of the 19th century their first contact with the Masai resulted in a Kisii victory at the Battle of Kericho, which kept their enemies at bay for some 30 years. Eventually the Masai attacked again, and this time beat them on the Migori River (c.1830). The Kisii were scattered, and many of them took refuge with the Luo, with whom they became close allies. It was not until around 1850 that the people began to move back into the highlands, but they quickly re-established themselves. They settled on wooded ridges, hiding their cattle in the forests for protection against the Masai, and fortified their villages with stone walls. They continued to be subjected to raids by the Masai, Nandi, and Kipsigis, but remained formidable opponents. They inflicted a disastrous defeat on the Kipsigis at Ngoino in the 1860s, and it was apparently the Kisii who destroyed a Nandi raiding party in Kavirondo in 1890, from which only two men out of 500 returned alive.

‘BANTU KAVIRONDO’

The remainder of Kavirondo was inhabited by a diverse population of at least 22 major tribes, each divided into an average of 30 sub-tribes, and mostly organised at village level. Most of these groups were closely related and spoke dialects of the Bantu language family; their modern name is Abaluyia, but in the 19th century there was no collective name for them, so that they were usually referred to as the 'Bantu Kavirondo' in order to distinguish them from the neighbouring Luo, who were of Nilotic origin. Kavirondo was fertile farming country, and the population was so numerous that observers in the 1890s suspected that it could never have been subjected to Arab slave raiding, although in fact the region had suffered its share of destruction over the years. Tradition records that Baganda fleets often crossed the lake in search of slaves, and that some time in the 1870s the coastal people had organised resistance under a warrior called Otieno, who devised a special spear — unfortunately not described — for attacking the Baganda canoes. Joseph Thomson also refers to a war in the 1870s between the Samia tribe and an invading army from Buganda. Thomson, who arrived in 1883 via Masailand, was the first explorer to survey Kavirondo, although Stanley had briefly touched on the coastal region during his circumnavigation of Lake Victoria in 1876.

Not all the people of Kavirondo had a good reputation as fighters, but their numbers and strong system of defences made the country difficult to invade successfully. The towns and villages were generally protected by extensive earthworks, although in the south these were sometimes replaced by thick thorn hedges. Thomson says that strong mud walls, surrounded by an outer ditch, were features of even the smallest villages, and that the heavy clay soil of the region was especially suitable for fortifications as it was extremely hard when dry. A photograph taken by Ernest Gedge of the Imperial British East Africa Company about 1890 shows a section of dry moat around one unnamed town. It appears to be at least 20 ft (6.1 m) wide and 10 ft (3 m) deep, with the inner wall built up slightly to overlook the approaches on the far side. However, according to their own traditions the Nandi did not regard these defences as especially serious obstacles to their raiding parties, as they were usually in a state of disrepair.

The Abakhoone

The Abakhoone were the most warlike of the Bantu Kavirondo tribes, and during the 17th and 18th centuries they had defeated and displaced many of their neighbours. About 1800 a coalition of other tribes — led by the Abaongo, under their chief Khasamba and his war

leader Makanda — came together to resist the Abakhoone. In the first battle the latter were led by four legendary fighters known as the 'brave ones', a practice which may reflect the influence of the Luo, who also placed great emphasis on the role of individual heroes. These men were: the one-eyed Mufuula; Esakha Simyula, who was renowned as a swift runner; Khudumbaye; and Matsaaba. The Abakhoone first sent their youngest warriors into battle while their elders watched, drinking beer and smoking hemp. When the young men were pushed back Matsaaba went forward to stiffen them, but he was killed, and the Abakhoone retreated. In the final battle of the war the three remaining heroes went into combat, but the army fled when the greatest of them, Mufuula, was killed. The entire Abakhoone tribe took refuge in a swamp, but their position was given away by the crowing of cocks, and the bells which their children wore on their ankles. Their enemies surprised them by a night attack and massacred them. The survivors dispersed, but a group took service with the Abanyala tribe, where they were still fighting as mercenaries in the middle of the 19th century. These mercenaries were renowned for their ferocity and were known as the Abaofu, or 'blind ones', in honour of the one-eyed Mufuula.

Wanga

Wanga was by far the most sophisticated of the Kavirondo polities, and was often described as the nearest thing to a centralised native kingdom which existed in the hinterland east of Lake Victoria. It was founded in the late 16th century by a group of migrant Bahima, who were eventually assimilated by the local inhabitants, the Abawanga. The *nabongos* or kings of the Abashitsetse dynasty ruled thereafter until the colonial period.

During the 19th century Wanga's military power was based largely on the employment of mercenaries from the Uasin Gishu Masai — a practice which other Kavirondo chiefs later adopted on a smaller scale, as Carl Peters witnessed in 1890. The first Wanga king to recruit Masai was Wamukoya Netia, but he found them difficult to control, and was himself killed by them around the year 1800. His successor Osundwa, who died about 1814, employed them in his successful wars against the Luo. After Osundwa's death, however, Wanga was ravaged by a civil war between two of his sons. A minor branch of the family was still independent at Wanga Mukulu in 1890.

During the reign of King Shiundu, who came to the throne around 1848 and died in 1882, Wanga at first expanded its territory, but later lost ground to the Luo. Shiundu was forced to rely heavily on the assistance of Arab and Swahili traders, who by this time had

established a permanent presence in the kingdom. Thomson describes a campaign in 1878 in which a trader named Sudi of Pangani led an army of 1,500 men against the neighbouring Ketosh tribe, who had killed some of his men. This army was divided into several groups which quartered the country and slaughtered thousands of the natives, who were virtually helpless as they had no guns. Thomson does not give the composition of this force, but although the Arabs and Swahilis must have been augmented by Kavirondo and possibly Masai spearmen he makes it clear that the Arab firearms were the decisive factor.

When Thomson visited it, the Wanga capital — then still known as Kwa-Sundu after the late King Shiundu — was in an imposing position on top of a ridge overlooking the Nzoia River, but was partially abandoned. Thomson remarked that the new king, Mumia, was ‘a mild and pleasant young man’, but that the people had no confidence in his power to protect them, and so had moved away to outlying villages. This was one reason why most observers believed that only the arrival of British rule saved Wanga from destruction at the hands of the Luo. In 1890 Carl Peters briefly claimed Kavirondo for Germany, setting up ‘Sultan’ Sakwa, a Swahili trader, as his governor. The area was soon abandoned to Britain, however, and four years later a British post was set up at Kwa-Sundu — which was now known as Mumia’s, in honour of its new king. In the following year Wanga was incorporated into the district of North Kavirondo, part of the Uganda Protectorate. Mumia welcomed the British and sent out his own emissaries to persuade the other Kavirondo tribes to submit. Mumia’s was also used as a base for the British campaigns against the Abakusu and Abanyala, who were the only tribes to attempt serious resistance to the occupation.

The war of 1894-95

The Abakusu had acquired a number of guns by trade with the Arabs and from deserters from the British forces, and in 1894 the British official in charge at Mumia’s, a Mr Spire, sent 25 Sudanese askaris to disarm them. This action had the opposite effect to that intended, as the tribesmen massacred the askaris at the fortified village of Lumboka, and added their Sniders to their arsenal. A punitive expedition was organised the following year. The British advanced across the country from the south in four columns, the entire Abakusu population fleeing before them while the warriors fought a series of desperate rearguard actions. The exact strength of the British force is not known, but it included about 1,000 allied Baganda as well as a contingent of Masai *morans*.

Finally a group of several thousand Abakusu approached a fortified village which belonged to Chetambe, chief of the neighbouring Tachoni tribe. Chetambe's fort, as it came to be known, was built on top of a hill overlooking a river and commanded a wide field of view in all directions. When the Tachoni saw the fugitives approaching, followed by a British column which was now in hot pursuit, they evacuated the fort and fled into the forests. The Abakusu, finding the place deserted, decided to make a stand there, and despite their exhausted condition they held off the British for almost a day. Eventually a single askari found a place where the defences were unoccupied and led his comrades on to the top of the surrounding wall, from where they opened fire into the fort. The defenders were annihilated, and Abakusu resistance ceased.

Meanwhile the Abanyala, under their chief Ndombi, had adopted a different strategy. They established a base in a forest, from which they launched hit-and-run attacks on supply caravans. The British also used Baganda and Masai allies against them, but the resistance of the Abanyala was more protracted, and they were not finally subdued until 1899. As part of a negotiated peace Ndombi remained chief of the tribe under British authority.

THE SUK, SAMBURU, AND RENDILLE

The Suk — better known nowadays as the Pokot — were a pastoral tribe who roamed the arid country south of Lake Rudolf, between the territories of the Turkana to the north and the Nandi to the south. They had apparently once been farmers, but during the early 19th century they expanded into areas formerly held by peripheral groups of Masai and adopted their herding lifestyle. Like the Masai they were of Nilotic origin, but they had incorporated many refugees from the Sirikwa after the latter were dispossessed by the Masai. According to Ludwig von Hohnel they were divided into two groups: the sedentary Suk, and the nomads. He describes the latter as 'very bold raiders, the terror of the neighbourhood, even the Masai standing in some awe of them'. Thomson confirms this, saying that the Suk were 'described as very warlike, and generally quite a match for the Masai, in whose country they frequently make raids'.

In the 1850s or 1860s the Suk became friendly with the Turkana, and joined with them in raiding the Samburu and the farming communities around Lake Baringo. Then in the 1870s the two tribes fell out, and the Suk forced the Turkana to withdraw from some of the southern portions of their range before themselves falling victim to the series of cattle epidemics which swept through East Africa in the 1880s. Writing in 1894 Frederick Jackson listed the Suk — along

with the Masai, Nandi, and Somali — as one of only four tribes in Kenya which were still considered dangerous to whites. He describes them as ‘not only very treacherous, but much more fearless of firearms than other tribes’. In practice, however, they did not pose a serious threat to European expeditions. Teleki had little trouble with them in 1888, and at the very end of the century the Austin expedition also found them friendly, in contrast to the hostile Turkana.

The Samburu and their Rendille allies inhabited the dry pasturelands to the east of the Suk country, where they seem to have lived peacefully in a sort of symbiosis during most of the 19th century. The cattle-herding Samburu occupied the wetter pastures, especially those around their forested strongholds on Mounts Kulal and Nyiro, while the Rendille grazed camels in the more arid regions on the edges of the Chalbi Desert. The Samburu were very closely related to the Masai, and in fact some observers regarded them as simply a peripheral clan of that people. The Masai themselves often grouped them with frontier clans like the Parakuyo and Arusha, under the collective heading of ‘Iloikop’. They seem to have originally been an amalgamation of three groups: the Lorokishu; the Labbeyok or Ngikuro, who came from the Lake Turkana region; and the Il Doigo, who had migrated from the Laikipia Plateau. These groups were not combined into a coherent tribe until the first half of the 19th century, and seem to have been originally forced together by the pressure of the hostile Turkana, Suk, and Masai, who surrounded them. Additional groups of Laikipiak Masai were absorbed during the 1880s and 1890s, either as refugees from the Masai civil wars or from among Laikipiak warriors captured in battle. The Samburu derived their name from a leather bag, the *samburr*, in which the warriors carried their possessions. The Rendille were related to the Somalis, but had adopted so many elements of Samburu culture that their warriors were virtually indistinguishable.



Earrings worn by Reshiat warriors. (After von Hohnel)

The Samburu and Rendille were both pushed out of the region around the southern shore of Lake Rudolf by the Turkana in the 1830s. The Samburu first encountered the Turkana when the

Kipayang age-set were warriors (i.e., between 1823 and 1837), and continued to suffer from their raids until the 1890s, but their best recorded campaigns were fought against the Laikipiak Masai. In 1879–80 the Samburu and Rendille fought together against a large army of Laikipiak who had been pushed out of their grazing grounds by rival Masai. The Samburu fought two battles at Longosori and Susukh, east of Mount Marsabit, but were eventually forced to take refuge in the mountains. The Rendille beat off an attack on their settlement at Kurikude-Intargeta, but nevertheless retreated westwards in order to avoid further raids. Despite this, the Laikipiak continued to harass them throughout the 1880s.

The Battle of the Merille River, 1890

Then in 1890 a major confrontation took place between the Rendille and the Laikipiak, when the latter descended on a village of the Sale clan while the men were away hunting. The invaders captured many women and children, as well as goats and camels, which they distributed among themselves. They then decided to force the entire village to move south into their own territory. When the Rendille warriors returned they found their clan camped along the Merille River as prisoners of the invaders. Refusing to accept that they had been conquered, they challenged the Laikipiak to a formal pitched battle. The challenge was accepted, and both sides held a feast of meat in preparation for the fight. The Rendille drew up in front of the village beside the river, and sent out warriors (at least one of whom was on horseback) to taunt their enemies, calling out: ‘You women; the Rendille are waiting for you. Come and fight!’ The Laikipiak attacked them, but after a confused hand-to-hand battle the invaders were decisively repulsed and fled southwards, losing 80 men killed and many others captured, compared to only five dead on the Rendille side.

This victory secured relative peace for the Rendille, but the Laikipiak continued to raid as far as the borders of Abyssinia, and in 1892 they launched another attack on the Samburu on Mounts Kulal and Nyiro. These strongholds were defended by warriors from the age-set known as Merikon. The Laikipiak leader, Loldapash, planned a two-pronged assault which actually broke into the Samburu positions on both mountains, only to meet with disaster there. At Mount Nyiro a warrior called Lentumunai killed Loldapash, and his followers fled. They were also repulsed from Mount Kulal after their leader, Lesanchu, was captured by the Samburu.

Organisation and tactics

The Suk acknowledged the leadership of *kachepkai*, or diviners, who were roughly equivalent to the Masai *laibons*. Both they and the Samburu employed an age-set system which was very similar to that of the Masai, although the Samburu elders as a group are said to have exercised rather more authority over their *morán*, as the warriors were known, than was usual in Masailand. By the end of the century the Rendille were also organised into age-sets, which they may have borrowed from their Samburu allies. A. Donaldson Smith, who visited them in 1896, says that there were about 8,000 Rendille altogether, and that they had often defeated the Somalis as well as the Laikipiaks, but they were hampered by the fact that their arid environment did not permit them to gather in large communities.

The Suk and Samburu *morán* fought in a similar manner to the Masai, using spears, swords, and clubs at close quarters, but because of their reliance on mountain hideouts in a region where the plains were occupied by stronger enemies, the Samburu placed much more emphasis on defensive tactics, notably the use of archery from ambush. 'Their dread of raids from the Turkana and Suk', says von Hohnel of the Samburu, 'lead them to live with their herds in the highest portions of the mountain.' According to the Samburu themselves, the forests on Mounts Nyiro and Kulal were favoured because 'the paths are small and good to kill enemies'.

The Rendille were similarly equipped, but they possessed a small number of horses which may have been ridden in battle, or at least during the preliminaries. At the Merille River at least one man rode up to the Laikipiak line to hurl insults at the enemy. Although they also had large numbers of camels they do not seem to have ridden these. In defence of their villages the Rendille warriors would first make a collective vow never to turn their backs on the enemy, and then draw up in three concentric circles around the stockade, where an ox or a camel was tied to the gate as a rallying point. The women and children would take refuge inside, but would flee into the bush if the rings of warriors were broken.

THE TURKANA

Linguistically the Turkana are classified as Plains Nilotes, closely related to the Karamojong and Jie. Like most of these people, they were principally cattle herders. They came originally from the Kotem-Magos region to the north of Mount Elgon, like the Karamojong, and took part in the same great dispersal during the 18th century. They migrated south and east towards Lake Rudolf, eventually occupying a vast territory east and south of the lake, which they called 'Eturkan'. Their own account attributes the origin of the tribe to eight warriors

who wandered east from the Jie country in search of a lost bull, and accidentally discovered an unknown country along the Tarash River. If true, this would have been some time during the early 18th century.

One reason given for the superiority of the Turkana over their enemies — just as in the case of the Jie — was the possession of better quality iron spears acquired from the Labwor. A 20th-century Turkana informant, discussing the victorious advance into Eturkan, stated that ‘all those people were defeated with spears made by the Labwor and brought to us by our Jie friends.’ Turkana expansion eastwards reached its climax early in the 19th century, led by the warriors of the Ngiputiro age-set. It could not be described as a deliberate policy, however, but seems to have been the result of the successes of small bands of warriors in countless minor raids. The previous inhabitants of the country were the ancestors of the Samburu and a mysterious people called ‘Siger’, who may have been the same as the Losegelai Masai. The latter seem to have been exterminated fairly rapidly, because by the time the Europeans arrived there was no trace of them. The Turkana met the Samburu in the 1830s, defeated them, and drove them eastwards. By 1850 they had reached the western shore of Lake Rudolf. A few years later some of their bands formed an alliance with the Suk, and the two tribes resumed their drive against the Samburu under the famous Turkana diviner Lokerio. During this period Turkana raiders even reached as far as the Laikipia Plateau and Lake Baringo, where they clashed with the Masai.

In the 1870s Turkana power received another boost when many refugees from the Laikipiak Masai, defeated in the civil wars, fled north to join them. The Masai story already mentioned, according to which the Turkana were no more than the remnants of the Laikipiaks, is obviously absurd, but one Turkana clan, the Komesoroko, did incorporate a significant number of these refugees. With the aid of this fresh manpower the Turkana swept northwards up the eastern shore of Lake Rudolf. Unlike most of their neighbours they did not suffer significantly from the cattle plagues of the 1880s, probably because of their extreme remoteness from any trade routes along which the infections could have spread. Nevertheless, their expansion was finally coming to a halt by this time, mainly due to over-extension of their limited manpower, exacerbated by an outbreak of civil war. In fact it has been suggested that throughout their history the wars of the Turkana were not aimed at conquering territory — although this was often the unintended outcome — but at capturing cattle to replace their losses in the frequent droughts.

By 1900 the Turkana totalled around 30,000 people (although this figure included many partially assimilated Samburu) and dominated an area of about 24,000 square miles (62,200 square km).

The process of expansion had led, paradoxically, to a reduction in military activity, as the Turkana found themselves spread too thinly over this vast region to be able to amass large armies. Furthermore the aridity of their territory made it of little interest to potential invaders, so that there was no incentive to maintain standing armies for defence. The traditional age-set system gave way to a more locally based organisation, and the authority of the elders declined. Skirmishing continued with the Karamojong along the Turkwell River, and sporadically with the Samburu in the east, but elsewhere expansion had stopped, and by the end of the century the frontiers of Eturkan were fairly quiet. This was to change early in the 20th century when the Turkana became a focus of resistance to the British, but at this period European influence was still negligible.

The tribe did fight a few skirmishes with the explorers, however. The first outsiders to penetrate their territory were Abyssinian and Swahili ivory traders, who arrived about 1884, followed by the first Europeans — Count Teleki and Ludwig von Hohnel — in 1888. In 1899 Captain Wellby found the Turkana timid, and inclined to flee if taken by surprise, although a couple of years later the Austin expedition was attacked on several occasions. They were not especially afraid of firearms, but this was probably due to unfamiliarity. Wellby describes how a lone warrior approached his party and was repeatedly fired at (contrary to his orders) by two of his Abyssinian soldiers. The Turkana continued to approach at an unhurried walk, apparently unaware of the danger. Wellby was equally disgusted by the Abyssinians' disregard of orders — he says that all his trouble with the locals was due to his own men shooting at them without provocation — and by their poor marksmanship. The warrior mentioned was unscathed, and the Captain remarks that 'if a single savage could walk slowly up unhurt when two of my men were firing all they could, then twenty savages would be a match for us all'.

The retreat from Lumian, 1901

Although strictly speaking just outside the period covered by this book, this clash between the Turkana and a British boundary surveying expedition in 1901 is worth including as the best documented example of the tribe's tactics before their acquisition of firearms. The expedition, under Major H.H. Austin, started out from Khartoum with three British officers, an escort of 23 Sudanese soldiers of the Egyptian army, and 32 'Gehadiah' or former followers of the Mahdi. The last were supplied with Martini Henry rifles, but according to Austin's companion Major Bright, of the Rifle Brigade, they were 'most indifferent' marksmen who often forgot even to load their

weapons! Near Lake Rudolf, on its way south from the Abyssinian border to the British post at Lake Baringo, the expedition ran short of supplies. They therefore made a diversion to a Turkana village at Lumian, which had been found to be friendly by a previous expedition in 1898. Just short of the village, they camped in the angle formed by the junction of two small, almost dry river beds.

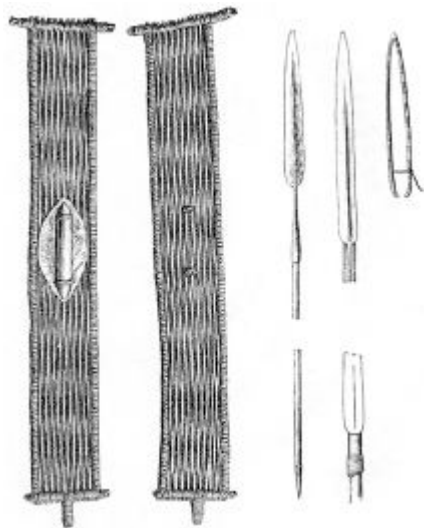
It is not known what had changed the attitude of the inhabitants, but it is likely that they mistook the expedition for Abyssinian slave-raiders. While the camp was being set up, two soldiers and the cook were ambushed in the vicinity and speared to death. It was now nearly dark, so there was no time either to move the camp or to build a thorn hedge to protect it — a precaution which until then had apparently not been thought necessary. Austin therefore ordered the sentries to keep their rifles loaded, and the rest of the soldiers to sleep at their posts with fixed bayonets. After dark, according to Major Bright's account, the 'giant Turkana' crept close to the camp along the river beds 'without the slightest noise'. Then, around midnight, they attacked: 'Rising as from the ground they rushed with blood-curdling yells on the unprotected camp. They came from three sides, but were met with a steady and rapid rifle fire which appeared to surprise them, for they threw a few spears into camp and then fled. For the remainder of the night we were left unmolested.'

But the Turkana continued to harass the expedition as it marched southwards along the western shore of Lake Rudolf. Still 400 miles (640 km) from the nearest British outpost, and with their rations nearly exhausted, Austin's men were forced to slaughter the baggage camels for food. Large bodies of tribesmen shadowed them just out of rifle range, but 'when they approached too near they were dispersed with a few well-directed shots'. It soon became clear, however, that smaller groups were keeping them under observation from much closer, although they were seldom seen. Bright relates how one of the Gehadiah was killed within a hundred yards (90 m) of the camp when he crept out to salvage some meat from a dead camel. On another occasion a corporal guarding the animals was speared one night within earshot of his companions by a band of 'treacherous Turkana', who escaped into thick bush before a shot could be fired. After one march, during which no enemy had been sighted all day, a soldier left his rifle on the bank of the Turkwel River before fording it to bring in a missing donkey. When he reached the far bank, a group of warriors emerged as if from nowhere and stabbed him to death. By the time the expedition reached safety, it had lost 45 men from starvation and Turkana attacks: only one of the Gehadiah survived the march.

Organisation and tactics

Turkana warriors were individually highly regarded, but tended to prefer skirmishing and sudden raids to massed battles. Life in the deserts of the Lake Rudolf region was so precarious that they had little energy to spare for show and bravado. One 20th-century informant described the warfare of his predecessors in strictly practical terms: 'the Turkana fought to get food'. In their painstaking use of reconnaissance, their emphasis on surprise, and the desire to minimise their own casualties while maximising the material gains to be made from war, the Turkana might be compared to the Apaches. This approach was encapsulated in the traditional saying that the secret of success in war was 'not power, but knowledge'. It is noteworthy that their resistance to explorers passing through their territory invariably took the form of raids on camps and the cutting off of stragglers, rather than large-scale attacks.

What military organisation there was was based on age-sets, or *asapanu*, which were sub-divided into territorial sections. These were more purely military than among the Karamojong and Jie, and are believed to have formed units on the battlefield on the rare occasions when large Turkana armies were assembled. Political leadership was provided by ritual diviners or *ngimurok* (singular *emuron*), who normally each controlled one territorial section, though some outstanding figures rose to positions of influence in the tribe as a whole. This institution may have been inspired by the Masai *laibons*, but among the Turkana the *ngimurok* had a much more clearly defined military role. There were three outstanding diviners during the 19th century: Lokerio, who led the early wars of expansion and lived until the 1880s; Lokorikeny, who flourished around the middle of the century; and Lokorijam, who in the 1890s is said to have come closer than any of his predecessors to uniting the Turkana.



Reshiat shield and spears, with a spear-blade sheath at top right. (L. von Hohnel, Discovery of Lakes Rudolf and Stefanie, 1894)

Lokerio is remembered as having greatly strengthened the position of the *ngimurok* at the expense of the senior elders. While the latter tended to be cautious about launching aggressive campaigns, Lokerio was happy to exploit the desire of the warriors to gain cattle for his own advantage, and especially encouraged wars against the Samburu as a way of strengthening Turkana identity. Some observers have suggested that under Lokerio's leadership the Turkana raiding parties became 'larger and better co-ordinated' than before, although precise data in support of this claim is lacking. Diviners seldom actually fought in battle, but instead would appoint a war leader — known, as in Karamoja, as *ekapalon ka-ajore* — who was chosen for his personal fighting prowess. However, the inferior position of these war leaders is shown by the fact that tribal tradition did not preserve any of their names during our period, instead attributing their successes entirely to the *ngimurok*.

FIGURES

73. MASAI MORAN Most Masai warriors wore only a short skin garment, which for everyday purposes was tied over one shoulder as shown here. One southern clan, the Kisongo, favoured a longer version which covered the knees. It was normally rolled up around the waist when in battle, to act as a belt to keep the sword in place, and also in order not to impede the warrior's legs when running. The fact that the genitals were thus exposed when on the war path accounts for the recurrent 19th-century descriptions of the Masai as 'naked',

although strictly speaking they still wore their usual clothing. Thomson and von Hohnel describe this garment as being made of brown kid skin, but red cloth was a popular substitute in the 20th century, and would have been available in fairly large quantities by the 1870s, when Arab caravans began to penetrate Masailand. As early as 1860 Burton says that the Masai traded for cloth with the Gogo, and a generation later the wearing of large amounts of fabric had become a status symbol. According to Harry Johnston, writing about the 1890s, 'young warriors going to battle swathe round their waists as many yards of red calico as they can get hold of, and will further throw pieces of calico over their shoulders as capes'. Most if not all warriors also wore leather sandals.

Beads were worn in bracelets and necklaces and used to decorate sword belts and other items of equipment, but the wide variety of colours seen in the 20th century was not typical of the 19th. Red, white, and black beads were the most common, supplemented towards the end of the century by blue. In the early 20th century the clans often differed in their colour preferences, the Kisongo favouring dark red and dark blue beads, while others, such as the Purko, preferred light blue and orange. It is not known, however, whether these differences applied in the earlier period. Nineteenth-century sword belts, unlike the elaborately beaded modern examples, were usually ornamented with a sprinkling of widely spaced white beads (see detail 74g).

Detail 73a is the head of an elder. After graduating to elder status the members of each age-set were no longer subject to the rules which governed the *moran*, and they were free to adopt whatever hairstyle, dress, and ornaments they chose. It seems, however, that the majority of elders shaved their heads and wrapped themselves in trade blankets or substantial lengths of cloth like Figure 43. The warriors invariably grew their hair long, coated it with red ochre, and plaited it into pigtails — usually one large one at the back and two or three smaller ones at the front, although the number varied.

Very similar if not identical in appearance to this figure were the Dorobo, a hunting tribe closely allied with the Masai, who may have descended from various elements of the pre-Masai population. Von Hohnel says that it was only possible to tell the difference between the Dorobo and the Masai by their weapons: the former used a different type of weighted spear for hunting, and also carried bows. However, both Gregory and Johnston report the existence of a 'pygmy' element among the Dorobo. This group, known as the Doko, spoke and dressed like the Masai but allegedly did not exceed 4 ft 6 ins (1.37 m) in height. They were armed only with bows.

74 & 75. MASAI IN WAR COSTUME In their natural state the Masai *moran* did not look very intimidating. Von Hohnel describes their slender figures and small hands and feet. ‘The expression of some of the younger men’, he says, ‘is almost feminine in its gentleness.’ It was perhaps for this reason that they devoted so much attention to making themselves look ferocious when on the war path. Figure 74 is based on an illustration in Thomson’s *Through Masai Land*, and depicts a warrior of the 1880s in full war regalia. Thomson’s own description of this outfit is worth quoting: ‘First there is tied round his neck ... the naibere, a piece of cotton, six feet long, two feet broad, and a longitudinal stripe of coloured cloth sewed down the middle of it. Over his shoulders is placed a huge cape of kites’ feathers — a regular heap of them. The kid-skin garment which hangs at his shoulder is now folded up, and tied tightly round his waist like a belt, so as to leave his arms free ... On his head is placed a remarkable object formed of ostrich feathers stuck in a band of leather, the whole forming an elliptically-shaped head-gear. This is placed diagonally in a line beginning under the lower lip and running in front of the ear to the crown. His legs are ornamented with flowing hair of the colobus, resembling wings.’

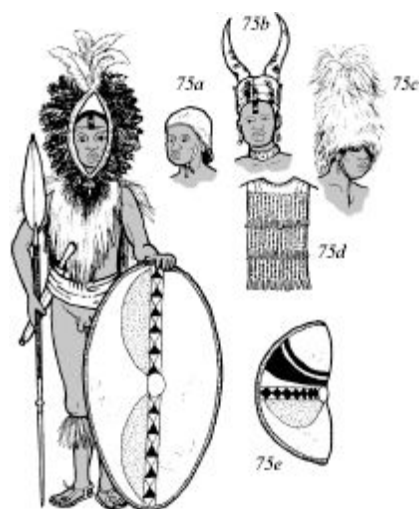
Fig 73



Fig 74



Fig 75



Mary French-Sheldon, who witnessed a Masai army assembling for a raid into German East Africa in 1891, adds some more picturesque details: ‘faces daubed with paint, splendid masks made of masses of ostrich and vulture feathers, plumed at the top with fine sweeping feathers, lions’ manes, and white bits of Colobus monkey hair; huge vulture feather ruffs about their necks, and even encircling their faces, and enormous feather panniers around their thighs; here and there a warrior with an entire Colobus monkey-skin, slit in the centre, through which he had thrust his head, and the tail and long hair blowing straight out in the wind; from his shoulders wildly floated in the breezes a “nebara” made of stripes or figured red and white cotton cloth, and a long hyena tail decorated with a lion’s mane,

and Colobus monkey tails swinging from his shoulders ... The leaders wore strapped across their shoulders a leather quiver, containing a supply of ostrich feathers to refurbish their masks.'

Figure 75's Colobus fur cape is taken from a sketch made by Harry Johnston, and his headdress from a drawing by Mrs French-Sheldon, showing the long ostrich feather plumes at the top which she describes. Probably these were usually left in their natural white colour, but 20th-century photographs show some which have been dyed bright pink, either all over or just the tip. These arrangements of ostrich feathers were by far the most common headgear, but other designs are sometimes mentioned. In 1893 Sir Gerald Portal encountered a group of Masai wearing an unusual variety of headdresses: 'an edifice like a guardsman's bearskin made of hawk's feathers ... or in some cases the horns of an antelope, or a contrivance of iron wire covered with wool in the shape of immense buffalo horns'. Luckily most of these items have parallels among other tribes, so it is possible to guess what they looked like. Detail 75b is a cap decorated with antelope horns, of similar design to the one worn by the Kavirondo warrior in Figure 87. Another possibility is shown in detail 83b. The hawk's feather 'bearskin' probably resembled the Luo type in detail 83c. Detail 75a is a simple skin cap with a beaded rim, illustrated by Hollis early in the 20th century and occasionally mentioned by earlier writers.

Detail 75c shows the lion's mane headdress which was worn in ceremonial contexts by a man who had killed a lion. It was not normally considered to be part of the war costume, but there were occasional exceptions to this rule. In 1894 Lionel Decle encountered a group of Masai, 'evidently on the war-path', some of whom were wearing what he describes as 'bonnets' made of lion skin. Modern photographs show that these headdresses are usually a pale reddish brown or even golden colour, perhaps having faded since they were removed from their original owners. Sydney Hinde claimed that the purpose of Masai headdresses was to confuse the enemy, and to make war parties seem larger than they really were. It is also possible that on at least some occasions they were used to distinguish between contingents of a war party. Lieutenant Vandeleur encountered some of the warriors who had carried out the Kedong Valley massacre in 1895, and described them as 'divided into detachments, wearing different kinds of head-gear of monkey and goat skins, ostrich feathers etc.'

The iron bell strapped to Figure 74's thigh is also mentioned by von Hohnel. It might be stuffed with grass for a surprise attack or a night raid, but when the warriors were on the march their presence was often advertised by the clanging of these bells. There were several variations on the leg ornaments which Thomson shows, including the

simple circlet of monkey or goat hair worn by Figure 75, without the awkward-looking fringed projections at the rear. Portal saw men wearing anklets made of 'hide with long stiff hair, possibly from the zebra's mane, standing straight out at right angles to the leg'. The warrior's head and shoulders, the spear blade, and sometimes his whole body, were smeared with a liberal coating of red ochre mixed with fat, which was splashed on on top of all the clothing and accoutrements and, in von Hohnel's words, 'makes him look as if he were dripping with blood'. Others described the warriors in their war paint as looking like 'terracotta statues'.

The weapons of the *moran* were the spear, the short sword or *simi*, which the Masai called *olalem*, and the club or knobkerrie. All our written sources agree that bows and other missile weapons were never used by the warriors. One illustration in Carl Peters' *New Light on Dark Africa* does show a Masai in full *moran* regalia carrying a bow: this may simply be a mistake by the illustrator, although it is perhaps not impossible that a member of one of the older age sets might choose to wear his old war costume. There was a strange tradition that the Masai had once lacked metal, and had fought exclusively with wooden weapons until they reached the southern limit of their migration and acquired iron from the Gogo. This is very unlikely, but it was true that they did not forge iron themselves, relying on their neighbours — especially the Chaga — for their swords and spearheads.

The traditional Masai war spear was about 5½ ft (1.68 m) long, and consisted of a short wooden handle and a broad, heavy blade. In Thomson's words, 'a blade two and a half feet long, a wooden handle fifteen inches, and a spike at the end about one foot and a half. The blade had an almost uniform width of from two to three inches, up to near the top, where it abruptly formed a point.' The exact shape of the blade varied from one clan to another. According to Thomson the northern Masai used longer, narrower blades like that carried by Figure 74, while the southern clans preferred a broader design like the one shown in Figure 73. A Chaga smith showed Mrs French-Sheldon a type of cactus leaf which he claimed was used as a pattern for the spearheads. Detail 74a is an old-fashioned type which had once been used by the *moran* but by the second half of the 19th century was only carried by elders, and had a mainly symbolic significance.

The spear associated with the Masai in more recent times is of a quite different type, with a much longer, narrower blade (see detail 74b). Exactly when the transition to this new design took place is not easy to establish, but it must have been some time during the 1890s. Thomson, who visited Masailand in the mid-1880s, reports only the traditional broad-bladed type. Mary French-Sheldon's detailed

drawings, and the eyewitness accounts of several other explorers, prove that the old style was still in use in the early to mid-1890s, but a photograph dating from 1900 shows a warrior carrying the new, narrow-bladed weapon.

At least one modern authority has suggested that the new spearhead appeared as a result of the greater availability of iron, but in fact the weight of metal in it is probably no greater than with the old type. Another theory is that the change was connected with the decline of intertribal warfare which took place at roughly the same time, and the increased emphasis on lion hunting as the main function of Masai weaponry (although it is, of course, questionable whether this change, obvious enough with hindsight, would have been discernible to the average warrior at the time). The wide, heavy blade would have been an ideal weapon for close-quarters combat against a human opponent, but engaging a lion at such close range must have been unacceptably dangerous. Lions were better dealt with using a weapon which could be thrust from a safe distance, and even thrown if necessary — a tactic which was much more difficult with the less well-balanced older spears. In fact it seems likely that the long-bladed weapon was not a Masai invention at all, but was copied — for whatever reason — from the Chaga (see the remarks under Figure 43).

Thomson assures us that the old-fashioned Masai spear was never thrown, but there were occasional exceptions: a Kaputiei warrior hurled one across a stream at one of Count Teleki's men on his 1887 expedition (though perhaps only because the obstacle prevented him coming to close quarters). Richard Meinertzhagen, writing of the campaigns against the Kikuyu early in the 20th century — by which time the longer spears were almost universal — still describes them being used only as stabbing weapons. Mrs French-Sheldon was treated to a demonstration by a Chaga smith of how the broad-bladed spear was intended to be used: 'plunging forward with an upward sweep ... describing a broad arc, yet he did not let go of the wooden centre'. This upward, underarm thrust seems to be ideally suited to the design of the blade, with its sharp edges and gently tapered point, and would presumably have been intended to disembowel the enemy with a single blow, as Johnston describes happening with the similar Chaga spears. For this purpose the length and weight of the weapon must have made it far more deadly than the shorter Zulu assegai.

The sword was usually about 1½–2 ft (0.46–0.61 m) in length, and was often manufactured by grinding down old European machete blades. The blade generally widened out towards the tip into a spoon shape, although the extent of this widening varied considerably. Thomson has an illustration of a very exaggerated type (see detail 74d), so narrow towards the hilt that it looks quite fragile; but other

examples, like detail 74c, are almost straight edged. In fact the Masai *olalem* is a well-balanced weapon, capable of both cutting and thrusting effectively. Its efficient design contrasts with that of many African swords, which are often intended as much for ritual as for war, and helps to refute von Hohnel's opinion that Masai war-gear was designed mainly for show. The main function of the sword was to finish off or decapitate a wounded enemy. Meinertzhagen provides a graphic description of its use in the former role: the victorious warrior would insert the sword behind his enemy's collar bone and thrust downwards until the point entered the bladder, causing fatal damage to the internal organs on the way.

Details 74e and f are wooden knobkerries, from illustrations by Thomson and Mrs French-Sheldon respectively. Despite their usual disdain for missile weapons, Thomson reports that the *moran* frequently threw these clubs as they charged. The modern Masai writer Tepilit Ole Saitoti confirms this, implying that the northern clans were more prone to use this tactic, and also mentions a 'stick with sharp points at each end, which is hurled at the enemy'. Krapf, writing of his experiences in the 1840s, even went so far as to claim that the club was then the most feared of all Masai weapons.

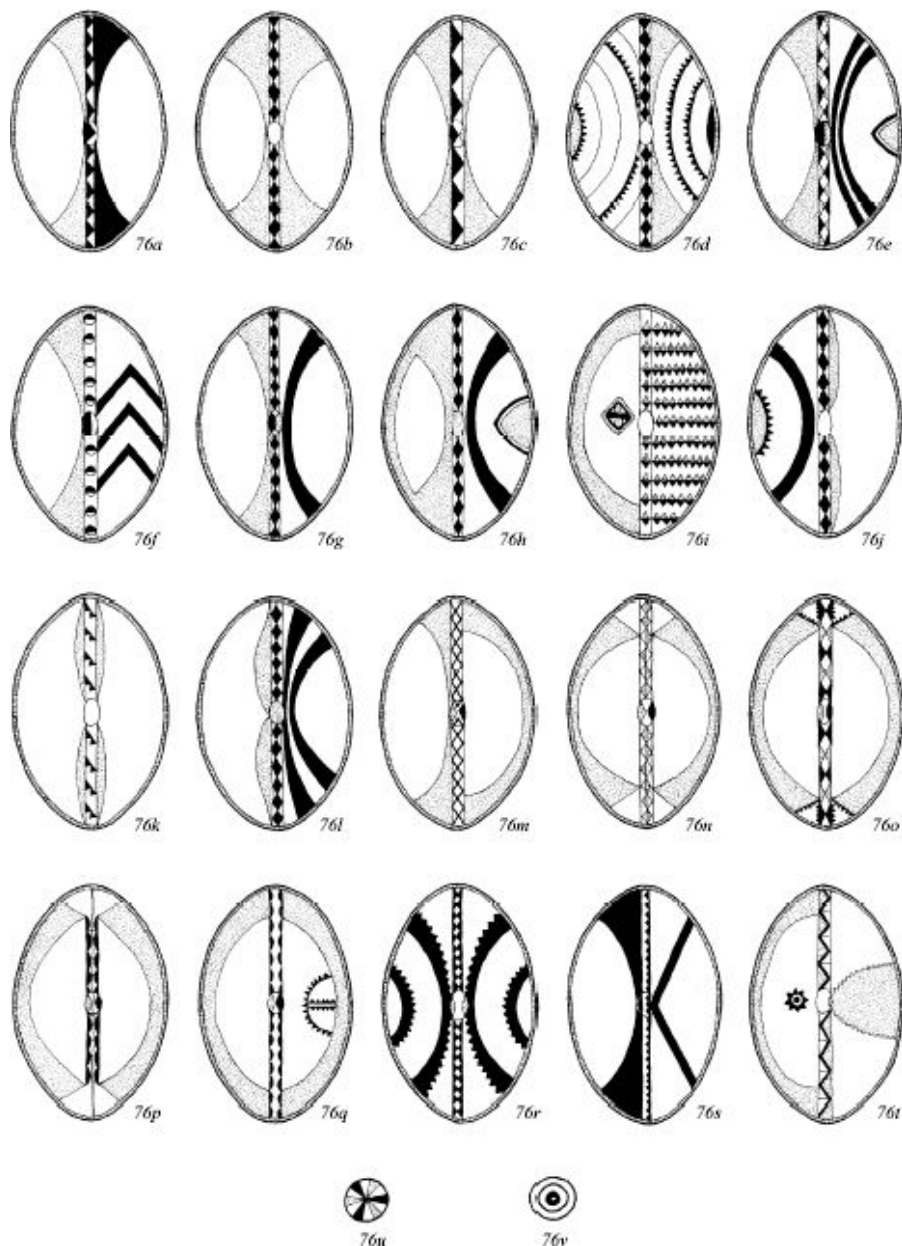
Shields were traditionally made of buffalo hide, which is much thicker and tougher than ordinary cowhide. As the Masai did not hunt wild game the buffalo skins were obtained by trade with the Dorobo, who often supplied them as finished articles. Such a shield must have been much more effective than the lighter type used by the Zulus and adopted by, for example, the Ngoni and Hehe. Its weight, and the rough surface of the hide, made it a formidable weapon in its own right at close quarters, while it was thick enough to stop not only arrows but even, on occasion, musket balls. A *moran* who visited Teleki's camp was unimpressed by a demonstration of the askaris' breech-loading rifles because he believed that his shield would be able to protect him. He actually agreed to allow the shield to be used as a target, with results that must have come as a considerable shock to him!

Shields varied from about 3 ft (0.91 m) high to around 5 ft (1.52 m). Most were about the size shown here, but a photograph taken by Gedge in about 1890 shows a group of 'Kwavi' standing behind shields which cover their entire bodies, from the ground upwards as far as their chins. Another picture taken by an employee of the Church Missionary Society portrays a shield almost as large, which when resting on the ground extends to the top of the warrior's chest. A posed photograph taken by Meinertzhagen shows a group of warriors in very close order demonstrating the 'Masai method of attacking in the open', with their shields either in front of them or

held over their heads, presumably as a defence against arrows.

Detail 75d is from a drawing by Hollis and shows a sleeveless garment, with alternate horizontal sections covered with beads and hanging leather strips, which is said to have been worn only by warriors going on a raid to celebrate the election of a new *ol-aunoni* ritual chief. Detail 75e is based on a view from above of a shield carried by one of Mandara's Chaga warriors in a photograph by Thomson. This slightly concave shape was unusual, but was also sometimes seen in Masai shields.

76. MASAI SHIELD PATTERNS Numerous examples of Masai shield patterns, known as *sirata*, are recorded. The great majority followed the same basic principles. First the surface was stripped of hair, polished, and painted white. It was then divided into two halves by a pattern called *es segira*, running from top to bottom, which — although varying in the details of its design — was supposed to represent cowrie shells. Like the rest of the shield, this pattern was painted in black, white, red, and occasionally grey. Thomson once mentions yellow, but no other authority confirms this. No other colours were used, although the red could vary in shade. On the left half of the shield (looking from the front) were elliptical designs indicating the clan and age-set of the bearer, which were usually in red. On the right side there were sometimes patterns (generally in black), which were specific to individual warriors, or related to sub-clans or families. By the time anthropologists began to investigate the meanings of the shield patterns this system of clan 'heraldry' was dying out, and in most cases by the end of the 19th century the right hand side of the shield was either left blank, like that of Figure 75, or carried a mirror image of the symbols on the left. It is likely that the use of the family symbols had been more widespread in previous decades, but the precise details of their significance have not been recorded. Smaller elliptical patterns at the top and bottom of the shield (see numbers 76n, o, and p) appear to have been temporary additions used to identify the warriors belonging to a war party or engaged in a specific campaign. They seldom appear in illustrations, and were probably not often employed. Twentieth-century shields were often very crudely decorated, but early photographs imply that men may have taken more care over them in the days when they were still used in war. Hinde, writing in 1901, says that they were painted with 'extraordinary accuracy'.



Most 19th-century photographs and drawings show men with completely different shield patterns standing side by side, but it is reasonable to assume that in battle each clan and age-set would form up together, and so entire units could have been recognisable by having the same pattern on the left side of their shields, even if those on the right halves differed. The only contemporary drawings of Masai in actual battle — those in Peters' book illustrating the Laikipiak at Elbejet — do show identical patterns, repeated on both sides of the

shields, but this source is questionable in several respects, and cannot be regarded as conclusive evidence.

The designs shown here may serve as examples of Masai heraldry, but they do not constitute an exhaustive guide. Most of them were collected by Merker, Hollis, and Hobley in the first decade of the 20th century. Those on the left sides can usually be attributed to a particular clan or age-set, but it seems that they were often borrowed by other groups, or were popular with more than one clan. Many other patterns were in existence at various times, but by no means all have been documented.

Shields 76a–h, all from Merker, were associated with the El Merturut age-set of the Kisongo clan, which became warriors in the late 1880s.

Shield 76i belongs to El Kereao, a branch of the Purko. The design on the right is said to represent the beading on the belt of an unmarried girl.

Shields 76j–l are from the Loitai clan. The curved red sections of 76k were often more prominent, like those in Figure 75, and symbolised either a stool, or the markings of a type of spotted cow.

Shield 76m was a popular design believed to have been inspired by the markings of a crested crane, which was used by the Siria, Loitai, and Damat clans.

Shield 76n is described by Hobley as having ‘originally’ belonged to the senior age-set of Keek-onyokie, but ‘now’ (c.1900) adopted by the Matapato, Kaputiei, and Loodokilani. The pattern represents the enclosed space inside a warrior’s kraal.

Shields 76o–q belong to the El Merturut age-set of the Ol Bruggo sub-clan.

Shields 76r and 76s were collected by Mary French-Sheldon in 1891 in the Kilimanjaro region. The clans from which they came are not stated, but the jagged curved lines on 76r, like those of 76d, were supposed to represent the stripes of a zebra. Known as *sirata sambu*, they were especially associated with the Purko, Keekonyokie, and Dalalekutuk.

Shield 76t is included to show the large, slightly irregular red blotch on the right side, painted in cow’s blood, which signified that the bearer had performed some outstanding act of courage.

Finally, details 76u and 76v are examples of the *ol-longno*, a ring or star-shaped mark on the left side of the shield, which was also employed as a mark of bravery (see also shields 76i and 76t above).

77. KIKUYU WARRIOR Based on sketches by Ludwig von Hohnel, and a series of photographs taken by Routledge in about 1902, this figure represents a Kikuyu warrior in his day-to-day dress. His only

clothing is a goatskin, or *ngu-o*, which Routledge says was usually chestnut in colour, but could be patterned in chestnut and white. In the colder districts high on Mount Kenya a longer version made of monkey skins (probably from the long-haired black-and-white Highland Colobus) might be worn. This man's forehead is shaved, and a strip of small feathers is attached to his hair. He wears a band of beads across his forehead, a bead necklace with long strings hanging down his chest, and a band of small cowrie shells diagonally across his body. The most popular colour for beads was pink. He also wears brass armlets, and metal chain earrings. War paint usually consisted of a thick layer of red grease over the face and shoulders, but Teleki and von Hohnel saw some men wearing this around the mouth or eyes only, and others who had covered their entire bodies in white or yellow clay. According to Lugard, Kikuyu warriors often painted their faces red and white.

DeCle says that the Kikuyu did not imitate the 'magnificent war costume' of the Masai, but there is abundant evidence — including Lugard's categorical statement — that many of them did. Some Kikuyu could therefore look very much like Figures 74 and 75, except perhaps for the addition of a bow and quiver. The Kikuyu spears illustrated by von Hohnel resembled the broad-bladed Masai type. Bows were short, and not very long-ranged. As they were used mainly for ambushes from cover and the defence of villages they were obviously considered to be adequate, but their penetration was poor; Teleki, for example, was struck by one which stuck in his coat but left him unharmed. Arrows were poisoned, and were protected from drying out by having strips of leather wrapped round the point until they were ready to be used. Teleki found that a real attack could be distinguished from a mere demonstration by observing whether these strips were still in place. Quivers were made from leather, and were fitted with a lid. Detail 77b shows the long barbed head of a Kikuyu war arrow. This was normally made from a single piece of iron, although von Hohnel also mentions wooden ones.

According to his own account, around the end of the century John Boyes equipped a small Kikuyu bodyguard with rifles stolen from an Arab caravan. He also allegedly taught the warriors of his friend Chief Karuri to shoot disciplined volleys with their bows from behind a rank of men with shields — a tactic previously unknown to the Kikuyu.



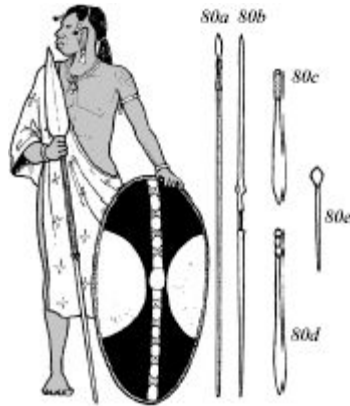
Fig 78



Fig 79



Fig 80



Swords like those of Figures 74 and 75 were also popular, and seem to have been the favoured weapon for fighting within the tribe. Routledge describes the Kikuyu as ‘really proficient’ with the sword, although they seldom practised with their other weapons. A leather scabbard on a belt like detail 74g might be worn underneath the goatskin, with the sword hanging at the right side. According to Routledge scabbards were invariably dyed bright red. Detail 77a is a club, ‘roughly cut in knotty wood’, from a drawing by von Hohnel. By the 1880s most Kikuyu shields were of Masai type, decorated in similar patterns in red, white, and black. Lugard also mentions ‘squares, crosses, and crescents, like heraldic quarterings’. Hobley states that the *sirata sambu* design shown in details 76d and 76r was the one most frequently copied by the Kikuyu. Blue was also used for the smaller shields carried in dances, but not apparently for war.

According to von Hohnel an older variety of shield, similar to the Masai variety but 'longer and narrower', was still sometimes used, but none of his drawings show this.

78. KAMBA WARRIOR Krapf, writing about the 1840s, says that the Kamba braided their hair 'like small twine', and hung beads from the ends. Not only their hair, but also their necks and limbs were 'covered' with strings of blue and white beads. This figure is based mainly on drawings made by Colville and Decle in the 1890s, but it is clear that little had changed since Krapf's day. Red and white bead necklaces and armlets were popular, and the men's lower legs were frequently entirely encased in rows of white beads — looking, says Lugard, like 'clean white spats'. The beads were augmented with polished iron or brass wire, and nearly all the warriors wore a small circular mirror fastened on to their foreheads by a string of blue beads. These mirrors were highly polished, so that, according to Portal, 'an assemblage of Wa-Kamba warriors under the morning sun is literally one of the most dazzling spectacles to be seen in this continent'. Otherwise most Kamba went naked, or almost so. They were tall and, says Portal, presented 'a grand picture of muscular development'. Peters encountered a war party 'completely naked, with only a piece of stuff wound round the neck and hanging on the back'. Portal describes men wearing an 'apron of hide', or a piece of 'brick-coloured' cloth over the shoulder. When in battle they rolled up these garments around the waist like the Masai, perhaps to serve as a belt for the sword, and painted themselves all over with a dark brick red pigment.

Some of the Kamba who migrated to the coast in the 1830s became familiar with firearms — Krapf saw a chief carrying a musket in 1848 — but their compatriots further inland continued to rely upon the bow, with which, says Portal, they were 'extremely expert and powerful marksmen'. Their bows were strong, though not particularly long, and were decorated with alternate sections of brass, copper, and iron wire wrapped tightly around them. Arrows were often poisoned, although Sydney Hinde regarded the poisons used in East Africa (in contrast to those used in the Congo) as fairly ineffective, and said that he had never heard of a case where someone died from a poisoned arrow who would have survived had it not been poisoned. Kite feathers were especially prized for fletching arrows. The Kamba were the only tribe in the region who did not use either spears or shields. Portal claims that an oblong hide shield was occasionally used, but this must have been very rare, as none of our other sources mention shields at all. Secondary weapons were wooden clubs, often wrapped with copper wire, and Masai type swords or *simis*.

79 & 80. NANDI WARRIORS These figures are based on a series of

photographs taken during the first decade of the 20th century, but reflect the appearance of Nandi warriors at least as far back as the 1880s. Figure 79's only garment is a *kipoiet*, a longer version of the kid-skin Masai 'toga', made from black goat or calf hide with the hair left on. This was tied over one shoulder (usually, but not always, the right) with a strip of leather. Figure 80's patterned garment is taken from a photograph in Hollis' book on the Nandi. It is dark in colour, with a lighter pattern and trim along the edge; it is not clear whether it is made of cloth or the usual skins, but the latter is more likely. Beads could also be sewn onto the *kipoiet*, possibly in similar patterns. A leopard's tail, with the white tail of a Colobus monkey fixed to its tip, might be suspended from the shoulder as a mark of bravery. Individual Nandi warriors often copied elements of Masai war dress: Hollis describes Colobus fur anklets; horn or ivory armlets; bells on the thighs or ankles; ostrich feather headdresses; white or coloured cloaks or *naiberes*; and vulture feather capes, all of which would resemble those worn by Figures 74 and 75.

Warriors grew their hair long, and either tied it in numerous small tags hanging over the forehead, or plaited it into pigtails (usually one at the front and either one large one or three small ones behind). Huntingford believed that these pigtails were also originally a Masai fashion. Vandeleur refers to 'big headdresses of monkey or goat skins, ornamented with cowries', which, to judge from a rather unclear photograph in Hollis' book, resembled the lion's mane 'busby' of detail 75c. Lion-skin and ox-hide headdresses are also mentioned, presumably similar in appearance to details 75a and 75c, although members of the 'Talai' or lion clan were not allowed to wear lion skins. According to Johnston, a Nandi who had killed a man would paint one side of his body white and the other red, and would keep these colours on for four days. Meinertzhagen, in his account of the 1905 campaign, also mentions warriors in white and red paint. The favourite colour for trade beads among the Nandi was turquoise.

Nandi weapons were spears of various types, swords, and clubs, as well as bows. They often captured guns and ammunition from caravans, but never learnt how to use them. The most common variety of spear in the centre, south and east of the Nandi country was the short-shafted, heavy-bladed type carried by Figure 80, which was called a *ngotit*. Detail 80a is a small-headed spear known as a *ndirit*, used by men from the western districts. Detail 80b, also referred to as *ngotit*, is virtually identical to the 'new' Masai type shown in detail 74b, and was adopted in the districts nearest to the Masai country during the 1890s. Around the end of the 19th century, therefore, all three types were in use simultaneously.

Detail 80c is a sword of traditional pattern, illustrated by

Hollis, which is very similar to the Masai type. Detail 80d shows a longer-bladed variety which was becoming popular by the end of the century, and is thought to have been copied from the Kipsigis. The sword was carried in a leather scabbard on a belt like detail 74g, which was decorated with cowrie shells. Detail 80e, also from Hollis, is a typical Nandi wooden club or *rungu*. Stone-headed clubs are also mentioned. A similar version existed with a rhinoceros-horn head, but this was associated with ritual uncleanness, so may not have been carried in combat. Hollis implies that only a minority of warriors carried bows, and while Vandeleur writes of arrows being shot from ambush his accounts of battles in the open refer only to spears. Some anthropologists have conjectured, from the large number of Nandi words describing aspects of archery (they have five words for arrowheads, for example), that the bow was their most important weapon in the early 19th century, before Masai influence became predominant. Early in the 20th century Meinertzhagen persuaded some Nandi men to demonstrate the use of their missile weapons. He found that the maximum range of their bows was an impressive 134 yds (122.5 m), while the *rungu* could be thrown to half that distance, and the spear to about 40 yds (36.5 m). However, this was the 'new style' spear, and while the lighter *ndirit* might also have been thrown it is unlikely that the old-fashioned *ngotit* would have been an effective missile weapon.

Fig 81



Fig 82



Fig 83



Fig 84



Nandi shields were very similar in shape and construction to those of the Masai. According to Vandeleur the shields he saw in 1895 were painted ‘a dull red colour’, and were not so ‘finely ornamented’ as Masai ones. Several surviving photographs from the early 20th century portray shields in a single solid dark colour (probably red), while others show bold but rather crude approximations of Masai patterns in white, red, black, grey, or blue, like that of Figure 80.

Detail 79a is the spiral horn of a kudu antelope, which was carried at the head of every Nandi war party and could be heard over a great distance when blown.

81. KIPSIGIS WARRIOR The Kipsigis were almost uncontacted by Europeans until after the end of the 19th century, and so — as in the case of the Nandi and Luo — it is necessary to rely on early 20th-century illustrations for their appearance. This figure is based mainly on a photograph in Peristiany’s book on the tribe, published in 1939. However, the lack of outside contact makes it unlikely that their appearance had changed much in the previous half-century. Apart from the characteristic backward-curving headdress, which was made of different coloured feathers, this man would wear either a goatskin loincloth or nothing at all. Being well off the trade routes the Kipsigis seldom acquired beads or wire for ornaments, although, like the Nandi, they preferred turquoise beads when they could get them.

This man is carrying a sword, or *rotwet*, of fairly typical East African design. However, at about 30 ins (0.76 m) the blades of the Kipsigis’ were longer than those of their neighbours, and they were unusual in making extensive use of their swords as throwing weapons, using a flick of the wrist to send them spinning just above the ground. This was said to be a useful tactic against a close-packed group of enemies, as one blade could wound several men as it ricocheted

between them. Other weapons apparently resembled those of the Nandi. The shield design, in white on a red ground, is illustrated by Peristiany, who describes it as characteristic of the Kipsigis. Warriors painted similar patterns on their arms after a battle, also in red and white. Several of the men in Peristiany's picture have a single horizontal line of white paint across the cheeks and nose, and some also appear to have darker lines painted or (more probably) tattooed across their chests.

82 & 83. LUO WARRIORS Like the Nandi and Kipsigis, the Luo were contacted by whites very late in the 19th century, and so the first useful records of their appearance are photographs taken during the colonial period. However, their dress and equipment were so distinctive, and so apparently unaffected by influences from neighbouring tribes, that they are unlikely to have changed drastically over the preceding century. Figure 82, in fact, is from a portrait of a chief by Joy Adamson dating from the 1950s, but which was plausibly claimed to represent traditional Luo costume. He wears a leopard skin around his waist and circlets of beads or cowrie shells round his legs, but no other clothing. His lower legs are painted white — very common practice among the Luo and their neighbours — with the pattern at the top in red. The spear was used mainly for thrusting at close quarters, and was by far the most important Luo weapon. The long, sharply pointed blade of Figure 82's spear was closely associated with the Luo throughout the 19th century, and was retained even after most of their neighbours had adopted the broad bladed Masai type.

Figure 82's shield, of a type known as a *kuot*, was made of buffalo or cow hide on a wooden frame. This example appears to be embossed with intricate patterns like those of the Bantu Kavirondo (see Figures 84, 86, and 87). It was basically oval in shape, but both sides were folded sharply back from the centre line, forming a 90° angle — a design which would no doubt provide useful protection to the bearer's flanks. Figure 83's shield is an *okumba*, which was constructed like the *kuot* but was of a flat oval shape (some examples are almost rectangular). The *okumba* was carried in battle alongside the *kuot*, but to judge from photographs was much less common. For example, among the six warriors in the photograph from which Figure 83 comes (taken by Hobley at the beginning of the 20th century), there is only one *okumba* alongside five *kuots*. The hair was left on the hide over most of the shield's surface, which thus remained in its natural brown or grey colour. The curved or spiked designs were produced by shaving off the hair and painting the exposed surface with white kaolin. Figures 82–84 show examples of these patterns, which were variously supposed to represent running warriors, spears,

or the horns of cattle. Every shield pattern seems to have been different — some being angular and spiky like Figure 84's, while others were more curved, like that of Figure 83 — but every Luo used a variation of the same basic theme.

Figure 83 is one of a group of warriors attending a chief's funeral. He wears several bead necklaces, heavy brass rings on his arms, and a small piece of spotted cat skin around his waist, but is otherwise naked apart from his headdress. The latter consists of a leather helmet with plumes on the top, feathers hanging down from the rim, and two warhog tusks. Details 83a–c show some of the enormous variety of Luo headgear. Detail 83b is constructed from the horns of an impala fixed to a skin cap. Detail 83c is made of hawk's feathers, and must have been awkward to wear despite its lightness; some photographs show headdresses of identical construction, but up to 50% taller! Alternatively, a smaller 'busby' like that of detail 75c might be made of monkey skin.

84. KISII WARRIOR The war gear of the Kisii showed a mixture of influences from their two most powerful neighbours, the Masai and the Luo. The original picture on which this figure is based — from the same source as Figures 85–87 — dates from the early 20th century and shows a 'new style' Masai spear like detail 74b. In this reconstruction he has been given an older broad bladed type instead, on the (admittedly unproven) assumption that the 19th-century Kisii also followed Masai fashions in weaponry, and would not have changed to the new type until the 1890s at the earliest. A plausible alternative would be a Luo spear, like those of Figures 82 or 83.

Fig 85



Fig 86



Fig 87



Fig 88



His ostrich feather headdress is clearly reminiscent of the Masai. It is decorated with warthog tusks, as are the beaded necklace and the bracelets on his upper arms; these tusks were worn to show the number of enemies a warrior had killed. Across his forehead and around his ankles are bands of cowrie shells. His shield is very similar in both construction and decoration to the Luo *kuot* (see Figure 82).

85–88. BANTU WARRIORS OF KAVIRONDO Most of the time the Kavirondo tribes went entirely naked, and travellers often remarked on the contrast with the well-clothed population just across the border in Busoga. Some of the war costumes of Kavirondo, however, were very similar to the extravagant outfits of the Basoga (see Figure 68), and may have been inspired by them, as well as showing signs of Luo influence. Figures 85–87 are based on paintings made in the 1950s by Joy Adamson, but from Joseph Thomson's account of his visit in 1883 it is obvious that they represent authentic 19th-century costumes. The warriors, says Thomson, 'delight in getting themselves up in the most fantastic head-dresses. Antelopes' horns, cocks' tail-feathers, basket and leather work are all enlisted to produce the most awe-inspiring effects.' Harry Johnston, writing in 1902, also describes circlets of hippopotamus ivory, and 'large tufts of black ostrich feathers' worn on the head.

Thomson says that shields could be 'of all shapes and sizes', but describes the most characteristic type as 'enormous in dimensions and weight. It consists of an almost entire buffalo skin, four feet long and as much broad, bent so as to form an angle, thus surrounding the bearer completely except in the rear. When advancing to the attack nothing but his head is seen.' These shields were so unwieldy that they were slung on the back when on the march, and, according to

Thomson, were invariably thrown away if a retreat became necessary. Figure 85 carries a shield of this type. It has been decorated with a few feathers, but left unpainted. His long spear, like those of Figures 86 and 87, is shod with a metal butt-spike. His headgear is also similar to those which Thomson saw; a basketwork hat adorned with an extravagant arrangement of birds' wings and antelope horns. His only clothing is a cloak made from the skin of a black and white Colobus monkey, with what looks like a leopard's tail attached at the back, and another monkey skin wrapped around his shoulders.

Figure 86 is from the Kisa tribe, which included many families of Nandi origin. He wears an animal skin around his waist, complete with tail, and a single wire bracelet on his arm. The headdress is apparently a tall wicker hat covered with black and white feathers. In one 20th-century photograph a Kisa warrior is shown wearing a complete leopard skin as a cloak. The shield is a large piece of wildebeest hide, embossed with various patterns but not painted.

Figure 87 wears a cape made from the skins of Colobus monkeys, and a leopard skin hanging down his back. His headdress, and the horns attached to it, are all shown in the original painting as cream coloured, with brown blotches. He is otherwise naked. His face, arms and lower legs are painted in complicated patterns of reddish brown and white. The shield is probably intended to represent cow hide over a wicker backing, rather than embossed leather, and is patterned in white, brown, and black. This may be the natural colour of the skin, but is perhaps more likely an attempt to imitate Luo patterns like that of Figure 82.

Figure 88 is from a drawing in Carl Peters' *New Light on Dark Africa*, and may be more typical of the poorest Kavirondo warriors who could not afford extravagant outfits. His light shield is made of basketwork and fringed with hair or feathers. Two small antelope horns are stuck into his leather headband. He wears nothing else apart from his wire earrings and necklaces, although Lugard adds that a loincloth and a few strings of pink beads might be worn. Kavirondo warriors are often described as painting their legs white. Details 88a and b are alternative hairstyles illustrated by Peters; 88b has apparently attached a pair of horns directly to his hair, but it is not clear exactly how this was done.

Kavirondo spears were usually long, with small heads. They were probably principally missile weapons, and Thomson describes a skirmish in which a young warrior attempted to throw a spear at him. He comments that although the men were of athletic build 'it is at once seen from their weapons that they are not a warlike people, their spears being of the very poorest, with small heads and handles commonly eight feet long, as if they had no desire to get into close

quarters with their enemies.'

89. SUK, SAMBURU, OR RENDILLE WARRIOR This reconstruction is based mainly on written descriptions by Ludwig von Hohnel, who with Count Teleki was the first European to visit the Suk, in 1888 (although Thomson had encountered a group of them in Masailand five years earlier). He contrasts the sedentary Suk, who draped themselves in a goatskin as shown here, with the nomads, who preferred a small 'apron' similar to that worn by Figure 91. Some warriors also wore their hair in a bag like that of Figure 91 — 'a solid mass', says Thomson, 'resembling in texture a cross-cut of unpolished ebony-wood.' A brass rod protruding from the lower lip, like that of Figure 90, was also popular. Several of von Hohnel's drawings show nomadic Suk warriors looking indistinguishable from the Turkana.

The description of the sedentary Suk would also fit the Samburu (known to von Hohnel as the Burkeneji), with the possible addition of a small cape over the shoulders, made from a whole monkey skin. This figure's similarity to the Masai (see Figure 73) is obvious; the Samburu were very closely related to the Masai, and both the Suk and Rendille were strongly influenced by the Samburu, so this is not surprising. The spear, the wrist knife, and the shield, however, show the influence of the other great warrior people with whom these tribes were in close contact — the Turkana (see Figure 91).

Von Hohnel says that Samburu weapons were 'most of them of inferior quality', but their buffalo hide shields were larger than those of their neighbours. The Suk used very similar equipment, with the addition of bows, but they did not possess iron arrowheads, relying instead on fire-hardened wooden points. The Rendille were closely allied with the Samburu and adopted their style of dress in its entirety. They differed in their use of the bow like the Suk, and in possessing a small number of horses, obtained from either the Abyssinians or the Galla tribes further north.

90. RESHIAT WARRIOR The Reshiat lived around the northern end of Lake Rudolf, where they suffered from Abyssinian slave-raids but otherwise had little contact with the outside world. This figure is derived from illustrations and descriptions by von Hohnel. He is distinguished from neighbouring tribes by the beaded band around his waist, and by the extraordinary ornament in his hair, which consisted of a sliver of wood or bone with a tuft of hair at the tip. The related Elmolo tribe, who lived by fishing in the lake, covered their hair with either red fat or 'greasy green or violet coloured clay', so it is possible that some Reshiat may have done the same. The metal rings around this man's neck, and the crystal pendant in his lip, are Turkana fashions (see Figure 91).

Fig 89



Fig 90



Fig 91

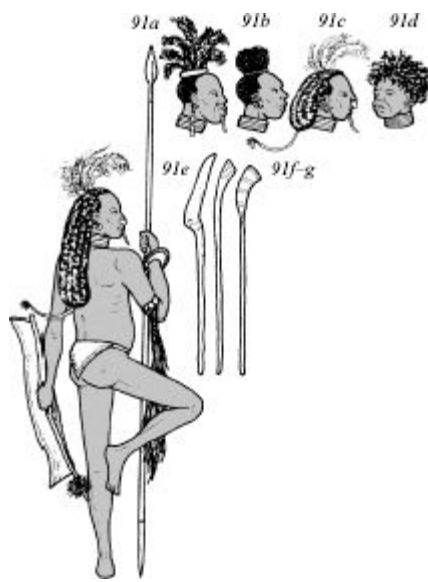


Fig 92



His shield is based on an example drawn by von Hohnel. It is similar in shape to those of the Karamojong and Turkana, but is made of wicker on a wooden frame, like the toy shields which Karamojong boys used to practise with. Buffalo hide shields were only occasionally seen, and in general von Hohnel describes Reshiat equipment as ‘of very inferior quality’. His spear is from the same source, which also mentions bows and clubs — although the latter are said to have been used only for driving cattle, and not for fighting.

Details 90a–c, from another of von Hohnel’s sketches, shows

alternative types of Reshiat spearheads, and the leather 'sheath' — also common among the Turkana — used to protect them and keep them sharp.

91. TURKANA WARRIOR The Turkana were very dark-skinned and did not paint their bodies. Therefore they referred to themselves as 'black people', as opposed to the Samburu and Masai, the 'red people', who were naturally paler and also reddened themselves with ochre. In the late 19th century the Turkana were popularly believed to be giants, although von Hohnel — the first visitor to record his impressions of them — disagreed, describing them as 'of middle height only'. Nevertheless, their physique always impressed outsiders. The same author continues: 'they are very broad and sinewy, in fact, of quite a Herculean build'. According to Captain Wellby, who visited the Turkana in 1899, they were 'men of prodigious size, many of them perfect giants in their build ... magnificent specimens of savage strength'. Wellby refers several times to Turkana 'giants'.

This figure, like the preceding two, is based mainly on von Hohnel's account. He is naked apart from his ornaments and a goatskin 'apron' over his buttocks, although sandals were sometimes worn. The most characteristic feature of Turkana costume was the 'hair bag', which was made from the warrior's own hair, matted together and plastered with grey clay, and often extended halfway down the back. The side nearest to the body was actually hollowed out, so that small items could be stored inside it. A length of wood or bone, 'curled up like a tail' as Wellby describes it, and tipped like that of Figure 90 with a tuft of hair, was often fixed to the bottom of the bag. Details 91a and b are alternative hairstyles illustrated by Major Powell-Cotton in 1903, while details 91c and d are both from sketches by von Hohnel. Detail 91d is the head of a young warrior. He has cut his hair short and fastened small black feathers all over it. Major Bright, who was with H.H. Austin's expedition when it was attacked by the Turkana in 1901, describes their assailants as entirely naked, their 'only ornament' being a single ostrich feather, dyed red, sticking straight up out of their hair. He goes on to say that this was apparently 'a sign that the warriors are on the war-path'.

Around Figure 91's neck are several iron rings, which forced the wearer to hold his chin permanently higher than the usual position and may perhaps have contributed to giving observers a false impression of the Turkana warriors' height. According to Powell-Cotton affluent warriors would place a lump of elephant fat under this collar, so that it trickled down the chest as it slowly melted. Smaller rings were worn on the arms and fingers; finger rings sometimes carried a small hook like those of the Karamojong, which could be

concealed in the palm of the hand and used to lacerate an opponent when grappling with him. Most Turkana rings were made of iron, but Wellby also mentions brass.

He has a small pendant hanging from his nostrils, and a rod-shaped piece of metal or crystal protruding from his lower lip. He also wears several iron earrings in each ear, and a cow or giraffe tail fastened to his right arm with a length of rope. Warriors were constantly begging Wellby for the tail hairs of his mules, which they wanted to use for similar ornaments. Von Hohnel says that men were often tattooed with small scars on both shoulders.

The Turkana spear or *akwara* was considerably longer than those used elsewhere in the region. Eight feet (2.44 m) was an average length, but one 'giant' chief seen by Wellby carried a spear which was allegedly 'twice his own length' — which must have made it more than 12 ft (3.66 m) long. The *akwara* had a long iron socket and butt-spike, with a central section made of acacia wood. The blade was relatively small but it was kept very sharp, and like those of the Reshiat it was protected when not in use by a leather sheath. On his right wrist this figure wears an iron wrist knife, or *ararait*, similar to that of Figure 4. Other weapons were wooden clubs as shown in detail 91e, and throwing sticks, or *aburo*, like details 91f and g. The latter were decorated with patterns of small metal studs. His shield clearly belongs to the same tradition as those of Figures 4, 5, and 89. It is made of buffalo hide, unpainted, but decorated with a tuft of black feathers at the bottom.

92. TURKANA CHIEF Based mainly on another portrait painted by Joy Adamson in the 1950s, this figure nevertheless incorporates several features described by 19th-century eyewitnesses. Beneath his headdress of ostrich feathers he has a band of red and white beads across his forehead, and an unusually large lip pendant. A bunch of beaded ornaments in red, white, and blue hangs on his chest, and there is a band of similarly coloured beads around his waist, supporting the 'apron' at the rear. None of these coloured beads would have been available before the mid-1880s, when the first Swahili traders brought them into the Turkana country, but von Hohnel refers to home-made iron and brass beads, which had no doubt substituted for them in earlier decades. Wellby says that at the time of his visit all the Turkana were greedy for red, white, and blue beads, which were the only colours they showed any interest in; he also mentions a chief wearing a brass chain around his waist.

This man has a giraffe tail hanging from his left arm, as described by Powell-Cotton. Other witnesses refer to such ornaments being worn on the right arm, so this may have been a matter of

personal preference. He wears a large leopard pelt as a cloak. In more recent times most prosperous Turkana warriors possessed leopard skins, but they were much rarer in the 19th century, before the tribe acquired firearms, and were then probably reserved for important chiefs.

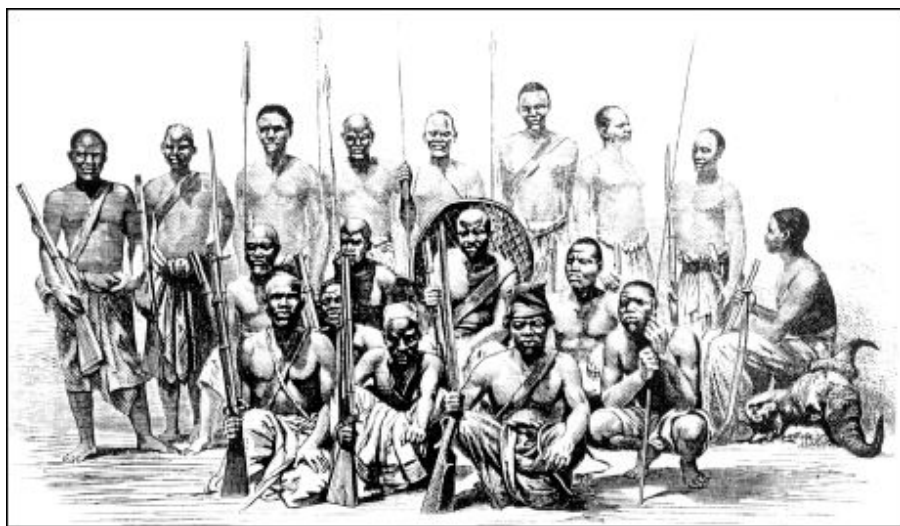
THE EXPLORERS

The European explorers who travelled through East Africa in increasing numbers during the second half of the 19th century encountered a number of unusual difficulties. Perhaps the most important of these was the lack of any widely recognised authority in the interior, and the level of endemic violence and lawlessness which made travel by small unarmed parties virtually impossible. Most East African chiefs were in the habit of demanding tolls, or *hongo*, in return for permission to pass through their land, and their cumulative demands frequently reached a level that even the best equipped expeditions could not afford to pay. In 1871, for example, H.M. Stanley was forced to take a long detour round Uhha when the inhabitants threatened to bankrupt him within a few days with their exactions. Opinions differed on the precise balance which was desirable between paying up and fighting — Carl Peters, for instance, never paid *hongo*, and was consequently obliged to fight almost every step of the way — but it was generally agreed that anyone who went into Africa without the means to fight would almost certainly be robbed of everything he possessed, and probably murdered into the bargain. Eugene Maizan, for example, was killed in Uzaramo in 1845, and Charles New was robbed of all his goods on Mount Kilimanjaro in 1861, forcing him to abandon his expedition. Speke and Grant nearly met a similar fate in Unyamwezi the same year, but were lucky to meet a friendly ruler in Karagwe, who sent them on to Buganda even without the tribute goods which they had lost.

Another reason why small unescorted parties were not usually viable in Africa was the lack of any universally accepted currency. Supplies had to be bought and tolls paid with cloth, beads, and wire, and as the tribes had different preferences and might insist, for example, on beads of a particular colour, several hundred porters were required just to carry enough trade goods to cover most eventualities. This made the caravan not only unwieldy on the march but highly tempting to potential robbers. Travel in the African interior was also physically challenging because of the difficult terrain and the lack of roads. The need to rely on porters often placed severe restrictions on the size of expeditions and the equipment which they could carry, and several attempts were made to find alternative methods of transport. In 1871 Stanley invested in a small two-wheeled cart which was supposed to be drawn by the porters, but the narrowness and unevenness of the trails made this impractical, and the cart was abandoned after Stanley saw one of his men carrying it on his head,

having found this easier than pulling it. In 1877 the Church Missionary Society introduced South African ox-wagons, but the native oxen were not strong enough for the work, and those imported from Natal quickly died. The Indian elephants which the Belgians tried a few years later were equally unsuitable, and died of heat exhaustion on the open plains.

For these reasons even peaceful civilian expeditions were obliged to organise and equip themselves like miniature armies, with the expectation of having to fight. In fact it is not always easy to distinguish between exploring expeditions and formal military operations: the former were often led by serving officers seconded by their governments, which equipped their personnel with weapons from military stocks. In addition to their porters most exploring expeditions also hired a number of 'askaris'. These were not necessarily professional soldiers, but simply reliable men who served as a bodyguard and police force. The latter role was essential because Zanzibari porters in particular were in the habit of testing the character of their employer by strikes and other acts of insubordination, and were often only kept in line by the threat of flogging or even armed force.



*Speke's 'faithfuls', from a photograph taken in Cairo in 1863 after his successful expedition to the source of the Nile. The title was given to them to distinguish them from the 'unfaithfuls', who had deserted in Bunyoro. The middle figure of the three squatting at the front with muskets is the famous Sidi Mbarak Bombay, who served as headman under Burton, Speke, Stanley, and Cameron. He is wearing his trademark white fez, which also appears in a more formal photograph taken by Grant in 1860. (J.H. Speke, *Journal of the Discovery of the Source of the Nile*, 1863)*



Selim, Stanley's interpreter, whom the latter described as 'the most important member of the Expedition, next to myself'. (H.M. Stanley, How I Found Livingstone, 1872)

Until after the departure of Cameron's expedition in 1873 the askaris were generally recruited from a list of reliable men recommended by the headman. For example, in 1871 Stanley's headman Sidi Bombay collected 18 volunteers 'whom he knew would not desert, and for whom he declared himself responsible'. Stanley describes these as 'an exceedingly fine-looking body of men', but other explorers — notably Cameron — were less fortunate in their choices. Therefore it became the practice to keep a register at the British Consulate in Zanzibar of those men who had proved themselves and could be recommended. This was at least an attempt at forming a professional corps of askaris. The headmen themselves were usually recruited by a system of personal recommendation, and often made a career of serving on different expeditions. Sidi Bombay, for example, started as one of the Sultan of Zanzibar's Baluchis, and went on to work with four famous explorers. This record was surpassed by his colleague Manwa Sera, who served under Speke, Livingstone, Stanley, Thomson, and Teleki over a period of nearly 30 years, and finally died on Teleki's expedition in 1888.

It was customary to present the headmen with good quality hunting rifles, and from the 1870s onwards most expeditions would equip their askaris whenever possible with up-to-date breech-loaders,

although the armed porters usually had to make do with flintlocks or percussion muzzle-loaders. Many explorers, however, expressed dissatisfaction with the military skills of their escorts. Speke says of the typical Zanzibari recruit: 'If you give him a gun and some ammunition to protect him in case of emergencies, he will promise to save it, but forthwith expends it by firing it off in the air, and demands more, else he will fear to venture amongst the "savages".' Stanley, on the other hand, often writes admiringly of the courage and steadiness of his Zanzibaris, and tells how, when threatened by Bumbireh tribesmen in 1876, they 'bore the first outburst of the tempest of shrieking rage with almost sublime imperturbability'. Unlike Speke's, however, Stanley's men were already veterans of several battles by that time. What could be expected of the average recruit is perhaps revealed by Cameron's comment about the target practice of his 35 askaris, who each fired three rounds at a packing case at a range of 100 yds (91 m): 'although there were no hits the firing was fairly good'.

The earliest expeditions tended to avoid fighting, if only because their ammunition was limited and they were dependent on local goodwill for supplies. Nevertheless, there was a clear trend as the century progressed from travellers like Burton and Speke, who co-operated with the Arabs and local chiefs as much as possible, and often travelled in company with Arab caravans along the recognised trade routes, to larger and better-equipped expeditions which were prepared to gain their objectives by force or the threat of it. In the early days, when expeditions were poorly financed, and European military technology was not sufficiently in advance of African methods of warfare to allow a handful of men to dominate much greater numbers, force was usually not an option. Harry Johnston mentioned another factor: at that time, before the Arab slavers stirred up widespread civil war and resentment of foreigners, the country was much more peaceful than in later decades. He pointed out that the missionary Rebmann had wandered safely across the foothills of Kilimanjaro in the 1840s with only ten porters, in an area where, 40 years later, Johnston himself and 20 armed soldiers had to fight for their lives.

Jerome Becker, who commanded the Belgian fort at Karema in the early 1880s, expressed a different view. He believed that the early explorers — both Arab and European — had had less trouble with the inland tribes because in the 1850s and 1860s the latter were still unfamiliar with firearms, whereas by the 1880s they had either adopted guns themselves, or devised tactics for dealing with them. Furthermore, the novelty of the white men themselves had worn off. 'The times are gone', he says, 'when the Arabs went from the coast to

Ujiji carrying nothing but a stick, or when the *mzungu* was taken for a supernatural being and, by his mere presence in a caravan, inspired fear and respect. The black demons have discovered our vulnerable points.'

ORGANISATION

There was, of course, no standard system of organisation for exploring expeditions, but the following sample 'orders of battle' illustrate the kind of forces which might be deployed, depending on the resources available and the hostility of the inhabitants of the areas to be traversed.

Speke and Grant, 1860–63

Captains Speke and Grant set out from Zanzibar in 1860 on one of the most ambitious expeditions ever attempted, aiming to cross the unexplored heart of the continent via Buganda to the sources of the Nile. They started with an escort of a corporal, a trumpeter, and eight privates, seconded from the Cape Mounted Rifles. These men were 'Hottentots' from South Africa, and were sent back early in the expedition as they were unable to stand the climate. A Jemadar and 25 Baluchi matchlockmen were also provided by the Sultan of Zanzibar as an escort for the first stage of the march. In addition, 50 muzzle-loading carbines were distributed to the most reliable of the 75 or so porters. These men were formed into companies of ten, each under a 'Captain', with 'General' Baraka — a Swahili freeman — as overall commander.

Stanley's Livingstone Expedition, 1871–72

For his famous expedition in search of Doctor Livingstone, Stanley recruited 24 askaris, each with a flintlock musket and enough powder and ball for 200 rounds. Sidi Bombay, the headman, was provided with a muzzle-loading rifle and a pistol.

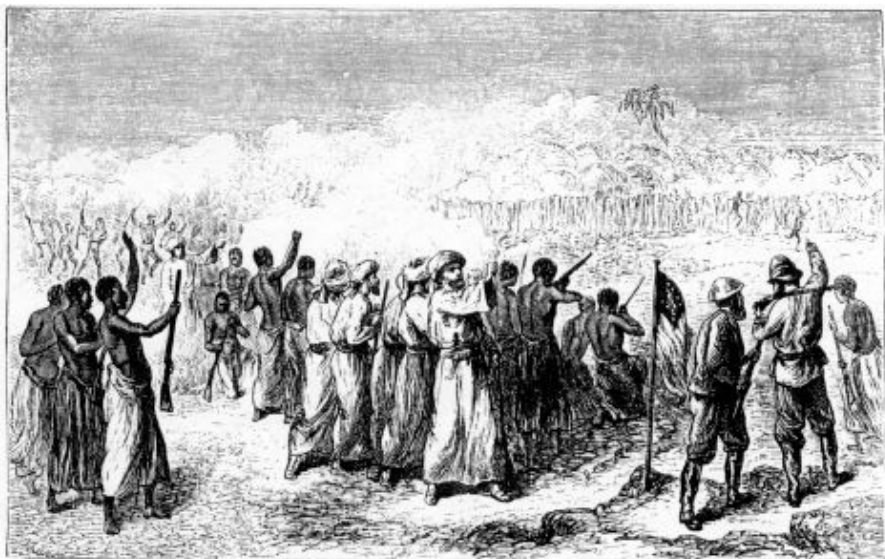
Cameron, 1873–75

Lieutenant Cameron, as a serving officer in the Royal Navy, was also sent out from Zanzibar to find Livingstone, but discovered en route that the old explorer had died. Cameron went on to make the first crossing of Africa from east to west, eventually reaching the Portuguese settlements in Angola. He recruited 35 askaris in Zanzibar, and equipped them with Snider breech-loaders supplied by the British War Office. Some of the 192 porters also carried muskets, but more

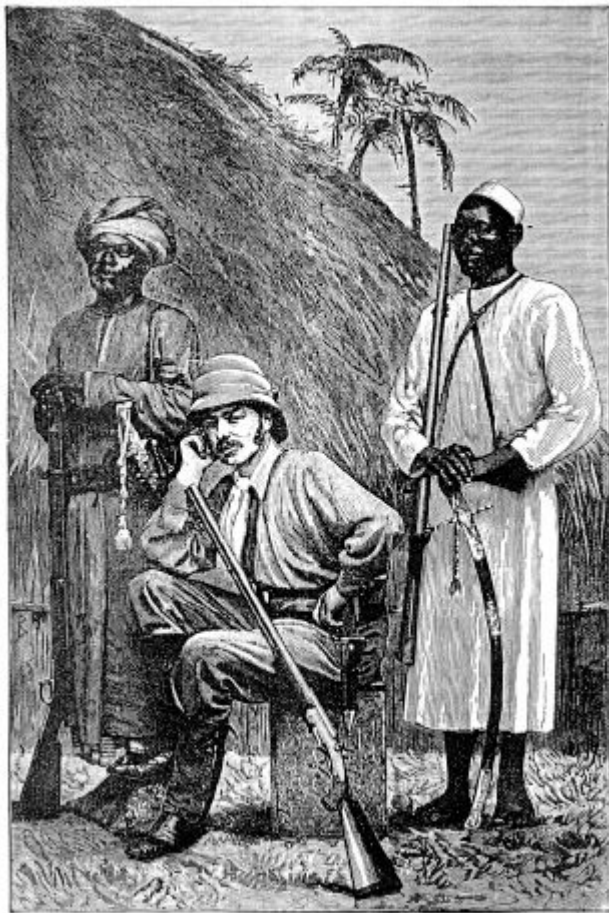
than half of them soon deserted because their inexperienced leader had made the mistake of paying them in advance.

Stanley's Trans-Africa Expedition, 1874-77

This was one of the most lavishly funded expeditions ever to travel in Africa. Under Stanley's leadership it fought its way across the continent from Zanzibar to the mouth of the Congo, engaging in numerous battles with native tribes, as well as collaborating with the Baganda army of King Mtesa in some of its aggressive campaigns. This was what one critic in Britain called 'a system of exploration by private war'. Its order of march when it left Bagamoyo in November 1874 was as follows: an advance guard of four chiefs and 12 *kirangozis* armed with Sniders; then 270 porters, mostly armed with muzzle-loaders and carrying a steel boat, the *Lady Alice*, in sections, as well as the usual trade goods; then the women and children, followed by the three white men and their gunbearers; and finally a rearguard of 16 chiefs with Sniders. There were in fact 70 Sniders issued altogether, but we are not told where in the column the remaining men who carried them were posted. The caravan numbered 356 people in total, and covered half a mile of road.



A sketch by Stanley of the Arab attack on Mirambo at Zimbizo, August 1871. The explorer himself and his white companion J.W. Shaw are depicted at far right. The Arabs in their robes and turbans are clearly differentiated from their armed slaves, and the Swahili wangwana of Stanley's expedition. (H.M. Stanley, *How I Found Livingstone*, 1872)



*Joseph Thomson and his Swahili attendants at the start of his 1883 expedition to Masailand.
(J. Thomson, *Through Masai Land*, 1885)*

This expedition suffered enormous casualties from hunger, disease, and exhaustion, as well as from enemy action — mainly because of the excessively fast pace which Stanley insisted on, and his habitual carelessness about securing food supplies. Before it saw its first serious fighting, at Vinyata in January 1875, 20 men had already died and 89 had deserted, on a march across fairly well-travelled country.

Johnson and Thomson, 1879–80

On this expedition Keith Johnson and his second-in-command Joseph Thomson explored the region between Uhehe and the southern end of Lake Tanganyika. Johnson died of fever early on, leaving Thomson in command. Their caravan was equipped with 30 Sniders, 20 muzzle-loading Enfield rifles bought at Zanzibar, and 22 ‘ancient’ muskets

owned by the porters. Thomson believed in negotiating with the natives rather than fighting them, and appears to have had no confidence in the military abilities of his Zanzibari recruits. He refers to his strength as ‘seventy guns, a number which would have been formidable in any part of Africa, if the men had known how to use them, or had had sufficient courage to stand and aim when danger threatened.’

The Belgian expeditions, 1877–85

Between 1877 and 1883, five expeditions were despatched to East Africa by the ‘International African Association’, which was a cover for the colonial ambitions of King Leopold of Belgium. They were commanded by officers technically on leave from the Belgian army, manned by locally recruited askaris, and at least notionally organised along military lines. As such they might be considered as campaigns of conquest rather than genuine exploring expeditions, but their achievements in either field were insignificant.

The first of the IAA caravans set out in 1877 for Karema on Lake Tanganyika, where two years later it established a fortified base. This was supposed to have been one of a projected string of ‘hospitable and scientific’ stations across the continent, intended to provide support to explorers and missionaries. It was actually a substantial military fortification, although situated in a place of no strategic significance whatsoever. It was built on top of a low hill overlooking the lake and surrounded by a system of moats, ditches, and curtain walls. The fort flew the flag of the IAA, which later became that of the Congo Free State (a five-pointed gold star on a blue background). The second Belgian expedition, which left Zanzibar in 1879, attempted to introduce Indian elephants as beasts of burden, but three of the four animals involved died before they reached Karema, the two British employees in charge of them were killed by Ruga-Ruga, and the experiment was abandoned.

All of these operations were dogged by what one participant called ‘bad luck’, but which seems more like chronic incompetence. Thomson, who visited Karema in 1880, says that the intention had been to build the fort at a location recommended by Stanley, but that the local guides had led the Belgians — whose officers knew nothing of African geography — to the wrong place. It was situated in the middle of a malarial swamp, with no food obtainable nearer than 20 miles away, and so far south of the caravan routes as to be useless as a way station for travellers. Thomson also remarks that the interior of the stockade was crowded with thatched huts, which were built so close together that it would have been easy to burn the lot in a few

minutes. To judge from one photograph, it appears that the watchtowers and portions of the wall itself were also thatched. Furthermore the Belgian commanders were on bad terms with the local chiefs, treating them without any justification as hostile, so the tribes had virtually blockaded the place. The Belgians had also antagonised the warlord Nyungu-ya-Mawe, whose territory lay across the supply route from the east. Several innocent visitors to Karema found themselves dragged along on punitive expeditions against the neighbouring tribes, on one of which the German explorer Bohm was seriously wounded by a musket ball. All supplies had to be brought in at great expense by Swahili caravans. Nevertheless, as Becker's memoirs show, the officers of the garrison were extravagantly provided for, with delicacies brought from Europe, a library, and even musical instruments.

Thomson later encountered the third IAA expedition on its way to Karema. It had been stranded at Tabora due to a lack of porters, because its leader had refused to pay Arab middlemen to recruit them. The askaris were enlisted from among those who had already been rejected by other expeditions, and there was no money to provide them with uniforms or up-to-date weapons. In general, Thomson describes the IAA as 'a laughing-stock' to the natives, and its officers, who had been sent to Africa with hopelessly inadequate preparation, as 'lost sheep'. He castigates their 'marked absence of all care and common sense ... in the fitting out and organising of their caravans', and accuses them of having turned many once friendly tribes against the whites. He adds that while he met frequent hostility in the area of the Association's operations, he managed to avert trouble by emphasising that he was not Belgian. Not surprisingly King Leopold failed to establish a permanent presence in East Africa, and after the Berlin Conference of 1885 he abandoned the region and concentrated his ambitions on the Congo. The fort at Karema was taken over by Catholic missionaries.

Teleki, 1887–88

Count Samuel Teleki's expedition started out as a privately-funded hunting trip, but was effectively hijacked by the Austrian Crown Prince Rudolf, who persuaded him to take along an Austrian naval officer, Lieutenant Ludwig von Hohnel, and to turn the expedition into a quest for a large body of water (later named Lake Rudolf) rumoured to lie in the far north of Kenya. Uniquely for a self-financed traveller, Teleki struck out across entirely unknown country, well off the Arab trade routes, and in the face of opposition from the Kikuyu and other hostile tribes. For this reason his caravan was very heavily armed: the

Count issued his porters and askaris with a total of 200 muzzle-loading muskets, 80 Austrian Werndl breech-loading carbines, and 12 Colt repeating rifles. Teleki was very reluctant to pay *hongo* and got into numerous skirmishes as a result, but he lost far more men from thirst and starvation than in combat.

Gregory, 1891

Another private scientific expedition joined by J.W. Gregory in 1891 was to be even more heavily armed. It comprised eight Europeans, 250 riflemen equipped with Sniders, and a Maxim gun manned by a detachment of ten Turks. The objective of this caravan was also Lake Rudolf, but it was abandoned soon after starting out because of an outbreak of war with the Somalis to the north.

Wellby, 1898

Captain Montague Wellby of the 18th Hussars was despatched by the British War Office in 1898 on a survey expedition to pioneer a route between British East Africa and the newly reconquered Sudan. This involved exploring the country between Lake Rudolf and the most south-easterly British garrison in the Sudan, on the Sobat River. Wellby was one of the last explorers to march into totally unknown territory, where, in his own words, 'we were in total ignorance of what we were about to encounter each day, for the only information that the maps afforded us was a blank.' The column was therefore equipped and organised like a small military expedition into hostile territory. Abyssinian, Sudanese, and Somali soldiers were recruited in Abyssinia and issued with 35 Martini Henry rifles. Scouts and advance guards were routinely deployed on the march to screen the column from observation and secure water supplies. In fact — apart from some skirmishes with the Turkana around Lake Rudolf — the tribesmen kept their distance from the caravan, and no serious fighting occurred.

Charles Stokes

By the 1880s there were a few white men operating more or less permanently in the interior of East Africa. Most of these were missionaries, but one man who was closely involved with political and military developments was the Irishman Charles Stokes. Starting as a lay missionary, in 1885 he married a member of Mirambo's family and went into business as a trader, leading caravans manned by his new Nyamwezi relatives between Zanzibar and Buganda. When the Abushiri War broke out in 1888 the British and German authorities on

the coast imposed an embargo on the import of firearms and the price of guns and powder in the interior soared. Stokes therefore went into the gun-running business, buying up British Army surplus percussion muskets and even some breechloaders from the African Lakes Company, based in what was soon to become British Central Africa (now Malawi).

He transported these guns to Buganda and sold them to King Mwanga. This was in contravention of an international treaty forbidding the sale of modern weapons to African states, but although the British and the missionaries protested, the Germans — through whose territory the caravans passed — did not interfere. In fact Stokes was by now too useful to both the colonial powers to be disciplined. He carried the supplies which enabled Stanley's Emin Pasha expedition to reach the coast in 1889, he operated the only postal service between Mombasa and the missionaries in Buganda, and the British Consul in Zanzibar courted him as a potential source of intelligence on German activities, although he never actually provided any. His financial backer was a Hindu merchant who also bankrolled the Arab slaver Tippu Tib. Stokes made vast profits supplying guns to Buganda in exchange for ivory, and in 1889 he even launched his own steamship on Lake Victoria.

By this time Stokes was a political power in his own right. The caravans which he operated were often more powerful military forces than the local armies mustered by the colonial powers; one which assembled at Saadani in May 1890 comprised 2,500 Nyamwezi tribesmen, all armed with guns. He supported the Christian faction in Buganda's civil war, using his steamer to provide them with weapons and other supplies, and helped to negotiate the settlement that restored Mwanga to his throne. In 1890 he was put in charge of the supplies for Emin Pasha's latest German expedition, with the temporary rank of Assistant *Reichskommissar*. At the same time he was secretly working for the British — with the task of making treaties with the tribes on their side of the border with German East Africa — and for Mwanga, for whom he was illegally buying guns on the coast.

Although he claimed to be a loyal British subject Stokes came to the brink of open hostilities with Lugard in 1891, when the latter commandeered a large consignment of guns intended for Mwanga and distributed them to the Baganda Protestants. The trader went so far as to threaten to march through Buganda under the Union Jack without Lugard's permission, and to die fighting at the head of his men if the British forces fired on him. This bizarre scenario was never realised, but in the following year he embarked on another adventure, described by his biographer as 'an expedition equipped by Germany for warfare in Belgian territory'.

This force entered Congo Free State territory (ostensibly in search of ivory) with ten Sniders and 600 muzzle-loaders, as well as an escort of 30 askaris in German uniforms, provided by Captain Langheld from the German station at Bukoba. Apparently the Germans planned to use Stokes' trading activities as a cover for the occupation of Rwanda and the Semliki Valley — a region where the borders of the British, Belgian, and German spheres had not yet been properly surveyed — before the Belgians could make their own claim to the area effective. A second expedition followed in 1893, but there were no armed clashes with Free State forces because the latter were still busy with their war against the Congo Arabs.

In May 1894 Stokes again attempted to interfere in the affairs of the colonial powers when he wrote to the British commander in Buganda, Colonel Colville, offering to recapture Wadelai in the Equatoria Province of Sudan, which had recently been occupied by the Mahdists. Colville was concerned that Stokes might upset the delicate negotiations which were going on with the Germans and Belgians about control of the area, and furthermore was unsure about whether the trader proposed to act on behalf of Britain or Germany. He therefore warned him off in a letter stating that 'I can only treat any unauthorised warlike operations as acts of piracy'. In fact it is unlikely that Stokes ever seriously intended to commit his forces to open warfare. Langheld later stated that 'Stokes was not fond of placing himself in personal danger, and was most unlikely to be involved in any enterprise involving personal risk. His one aim was to make money.'



*Shaw and Farquhar, Stanley's British companions on his 1871 expedition. Apart from Shaw's odd conical hat, their outfits would not have been out of place on a shooting expedition in England. Neither of these men survived the march to Lake Tanganyika. (H.M. Stanley, *How I Found Livingstone*, 1872)*

Stokes' career came to an end in January 1895. He returned to the Congo Free State, where he had left a party under his employee Juma bin Ali in charge of a huge cache of guns and ivory, but found that the local Arabs and Manyema tribesmen had wiped out the party and stolen his goods. His other Arab trading partners had by now either defected to the Belgians or been defeated by them. Instead of escaping into British territory he attempted to negotiate with the Belgian commander in the area, Captain Lothaire, and marched to meet him with an escort of ten German askaris, flying the British and German flags. Lothaire arrested and summarily hanged him for supplying guns to the Arabs and being part of a German plot to invade the Free State. The Belgians then located Stokes' base in the forest and massacred his men, many of whom were sick. The killing of a white man — 'for all the world as if he were a native' as one British official revealingly commented — sparked an international incident, but did not prevent the British and Belgian officers on the spot finalising the demarcation of the frontier amicably later the same year.

TACTICS

In view of the variety of possible threats, and the lack of military training of many of their personnel, it is not surprising that there was no formal tactical doctrine among exploring expeditions. Nevertheless, a number of explorers did have considerable military experience, and often improvised tactics very successfully under unfamiliar conditions. Many, such as Speke and Grant (who were both distinguished veterans of the wars in India), were serving army or navy officers. Stanley, although employed as a journalist, had covered several conflicts as a war correspondent and had fought in the American Civil War. Carl Peters, although not from a military background, showed exceptional skill in fighting his way through more than 1,000 miles (1,600 km) of hostile territory — although admittedly this was mostly territory which was only hostile because of his own provocative behaviour.

On the other hand, the adventures of some explorers occasionally read more like farce than military history. In 1849, Krapf had to be rescued from Kikuyu bandits by friendly Kambas after the disastrous failure of his own attempts at defence: 'In the confusion I lost my powder horn, and one of my people burst the barrel of his gun by putting too large a charge into it. The ramrod of another was broken through his being knocked over [by one of Krapf's own men] ... just as he was going to load, whilst the gun of another missed fire altogether.' On another occasion Krapf was forced to beat a hasty retreat from a fight after accidentally firing away his own ramrod.

Other travellers might have to seek counsel from those with relevant experience. Mary French-Sheldon quotes the following advice given to her by Captain Stairs, a veteran of Stanley's Emin Pasha Expedition, in 1891:

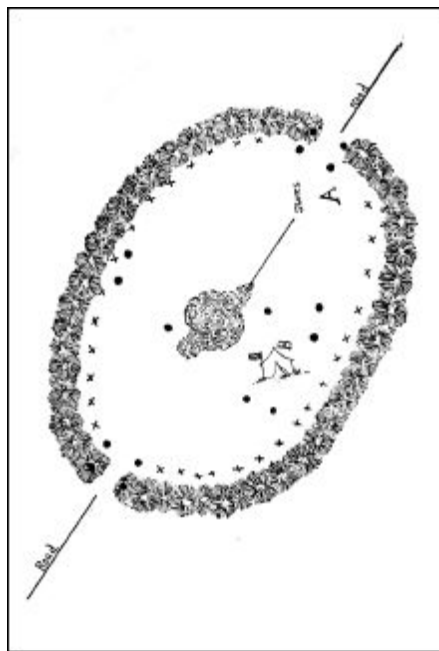
'Hints For Camps, Etc., As Regards Defence.

'I. Choose commanding position, one not near long grass or bush, if hostile natives are about.

'II. Beware of long, dry grass near camp; natives may set fire to it and burn you out. So clear a space round your goods of twenty to thirty yards diameter.

'III. Cover up your goods with tarpaulins, and place sentries, and as a general order let this be the rallying point in the night or when danger appears imminent.

'IV. Place sentries (black) in groups of not less than three men each at exit and ingress of camp, seventy yards from centre, and in great danger, groups to right and left.



Suggested plan for an explorer's camp in hostile territory, drawn up for Mrs French-Sheldon in 1891 by Captain W.E. Stairs of the Royal Engineers. The dots show the positions of the sentries, and the crosses those of the sleeping porters, who by lying close under the surrounding thorn hedge would be relatively safe from arrows shot into the camp at random, as well as being in a position to alert their master if an attacker penetrated the hedge. (Mrs M. French-Sheldon, Sultan to Sultan, 1892)

'V. In an attack on camp at night the first notice will be some arrows falling in the camp. At once order silence, smother down the

fires, as the natives invariably fire at these in hopes of hitting men lying about them, and rally near the centre pile of goods, and store of ammunition; then send out some of your most reliable men, but you yourself keep in camp and direct matters.

‘VI. Never move a step in Africa without two or three attendants with rifles. Make this a maxim, for one day it may save your life; and remember there are maniacs in Africa as well as elsewhere.

‘VII. Your column organise as follows: first, your riflemen, without loads*; then the carriers, then a small force under a chief in rear, and for this pick your very best man. [*Mrs French Sheldon remarks that this was impossible in her case, as all her riflemen doubled as porters. Captain Stairs, of course, was accustomed to more lavishly equipped military-style expeditions.]

‘VIII. Insist on your personal baggage, tents, and blankets being near your person, and always up in front, otherwise you may arrive in camp and your things be hours behind.

‘IX. Number every bale, box, load, or bundle, and enter in a book against the name of its carrier, and endeavour to give the same loads to the same men each day.

‘X. Fall the men in each morning, call the roll, and give out their loads in person. This keeps up the discipline and prevents favouritism, as the best black chief will give his friends light loads if left to himself.

‘XI. Always try to keep near you quinine, carbonate of ammonia, and one or two other standard medicines.

‘XII. Natives as a rule prefer day to night for attack; a night march may often put you out of a difficulty.

‘XIII. Go slowly at first, with frequent halts till the men and women get strong; allow as many women as possible to accompany you, as it shows peaceful intentions.

‘XIV. Do all the palavering yourself if possible. Swahili will carry you far along your journey.

‘XV. You as a woman possess many points that no man would have in dealing with Africans. You therefore should find an entree easy anywhere.

‘Never put your tent on the edge of the camp, and always have trusty ones sleeping near you.

‘When no immediate danger is apprehended, the sentries should be outside the camp, fifty yards, which is about bow-shot.

‘In conclusion, I feel sure that your invaluable tact and perception will pull you through much that a man would fail at.

‘In danger or in safety, do not forget to have always in camp some watchers, or sentries, with their rifles handy.

‘You can never be safe till this is done, and the men know what to do in an emergency.’

As late as 1894, in a chapter on British East Africa which he contributed to a book on big-game hunting, Frederick Jackson continued to recommend that travellers organise their caravans as if for a military campaign. If travelling no further than Mount Kilimanjaro or the south bank of the Tana River, he says, 25 askaris with breech-loading rifles would be a sufficient force, but for a trip onto the Masai plains between 50 and 80 would be better. North of Lake Baringo, he suggests taking ‘at least 80 to 100’ men, as the Suk and other local tribes were not only hostile but relatively unafraid of firearms. Beyond the Tana, where Somali bands might be encountered, he regards it as too dangerous to venture without a force of 150 rifles. This advice probably erred on the side of caution — only a year or so later Major Owen was ‘firmly of the belief that a disciplined caravan with thirty rifles is now quite safe in the once dreaded Masailand’ — but it illustrates the extent to which travel was still thought of in military terms, even in country nominally under British control.

The building of a fortified camp at night was generally regarded as an essential precaution against attack. Often thorn bushes were simply uprooted and dragged together to form an improvised obstacle, although when time permitted more substantial wooden stockades and earthworks might be constructed. Stanley, who was never short of manpower, even made a practice of building wooden watchtowers around the perimeters of his camps. Peters eventually abandoned the fencing of his camps, relying instead on a ring of sentries with bonfires at every post, but his Somalis were exceptionally reliable soldiers, and few leaders would have wanted to rely on the steadiness of Zanzibari askaris if attacked at night without defences.

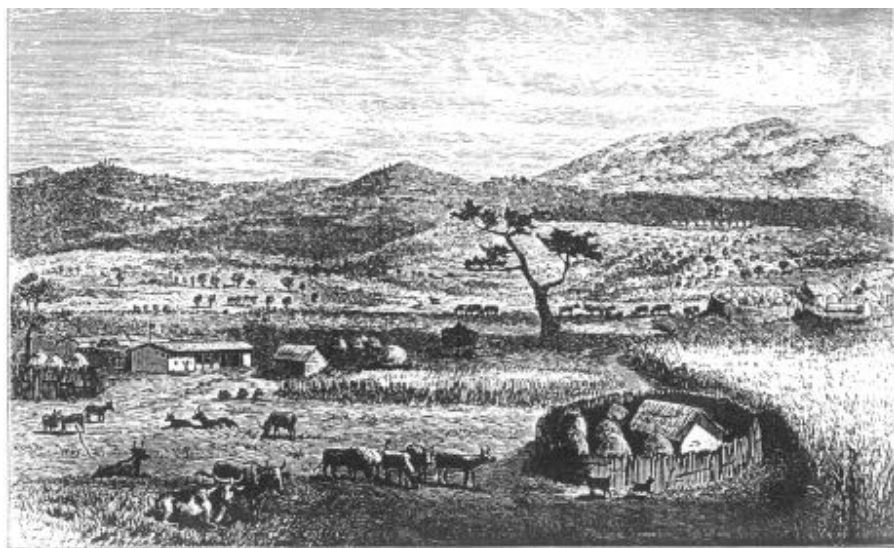
Surprisingly few exploring expeditions ever stood up to a full-scale daylight attack by determined opponents in open country. Stanley and Peters were among the minority who attempted this, and both agreed that it was advisable to take the offensive if possible, rather than surrendering the initiative to a more mobile enemy. After one skirmish in Kavirondo Peters criticised the commander of his Somalis, Hussein, for being too cautious. Instead of advancing slowly while firing, which wasted ammunition and enabled the enemy to get away with their cattle, he believed that the best tactic was to fire one or two volleys and then charge.

Peters considered that the most important strategic consideration, in fact ‘the chief task of the leader’, was the organisation of supplies for the expedition. He condemns Stanley for

neglecting this, and remarks in connection with the latter's Emin Pasha Expedition that its leader 'even seems to be of the opinion that he will awaken the sympathies of Europe, by giving a picture of the sufferings that resulted from such carelessness'. The German explorer's solution to his own difficulties was to steal large numbers of cattle, sheep, and goats from the tribes along his route and drive them along with him to provide meat.

Rockets and psychological warfare

Psychological warfare was always considered vital when dealing with unsophisticated tribes, and several explorers carried a supply of rockets in the hope of overawing attackers without having to resort to their guns. Baker used 3-pdr Hales rockets as offensive weapons in Bunyoro in 1872. He reported that they could be 'slipped under the strap of a soldier's knapsack and carried with ease during a march', but that they would have been far more useful if they had carried explosive warheads. He tried to use them to set fire to the thatched huts of the Bari, but they failed to do so because 'the rapidity of their flight did not afford sufficient time for ignition'. Instead he used what he calls 'capped blue lights', incendiary devices which could be struck on the butt of a gun, and 'will set fire to a grass hut in an instant'.



*Kwiwara, an outlying settlement of Tabora, where Stanley established a base during his 1871 expedition. Note the US flag flying from the tembe on the left. (H.M. Stanley, *How I Found Livingstone*, 1872)*

Harry Johnston employed fireworks as a purely psychological

weapon on Mount Kilimanjaro in 1884, frightening off an army of Chaga warriors with ‘a grand display of fireworks ... Bengal lights, red fire, Roman candles, serpent squibs, and lastly a magnificent flight of rockets’, all of which had been brought along specifically for this purpose. They were not always effective, however; Peters found that the Masai were not intimidated by his red and green flares, although they did provide useful illumination for shooting at night.

Perhaps the most bizarre stratagem ever adopted in Africa is described by Joseph Thomson, who discovered the remains of an expedition led by a French explorer, the Abbé Debaize, at Karema in 1880. Debaize had brought with him ‘twelve boxes of rockets and fireworks, which would require about forty-eight men to carry them, several boxes of dynamite (for what conceivable use no one knows), two large barrels of gunpowder, innumerable revolvers and guns, two coats of armour ... also a hurdy-gurdy, valued at 12,000 francs.’ The rockets and the barrel organ were intended to frighten off hostile tribesmen, and the armour (whose method of construction is not stated) was supposed to protect Debaize from arrows while he let off the fireworks. This scheme, says Thomson, ‘has never yet had a proper trial’, as Debaize ‘went mad’ and died at Ujiji.

Thomson himself resorted to crude conjuring tricks and the novelty of a white man’s appearance to impress the Masai, removing and replacing his artificial front teeth, and asking the warriors ‘Could anyone but a great medicine-man have a skin like mine, or hair like mine?’ As his caravan was far too weak to have resisted an attack, he believed that his showmanship had probably saved his life. William Chanler, a rich young American who travelled to the Rendille country in 1892, was inspired by this example to take along his own conjuror, as well as a dozen pairs of flesh-coloured gloves, which according to an interview in *Harper’s Magazine* he intended ‘to pull carelessly off his hands while conversing with African kings, and so impress them with the idea that he is skinning himself alive’.

FIGURES

93. JOHN HANNING SPEKE 1862 The following six figures are merely representative of an enormous variety of outfits which were worn by travellers and explorers — as opposed to the members of overtly military expeditions — in East Africa. Based on a photograph in Speke’s *Journal of the Discovery of the Source of the Nile*, this figure typifies the sort of civilian hunting costume which most of the early explorers favoured, as well as the heavy beards which were fashionable until the 1870s. Here Speke is shown wearing light brown trousers, a green tweed waistcoat, and a check flannel shirt. Several of

the sketches in his book show him wearing a jacket over the top of the waistcoat, as well as a felt hat with a small brim. White umbrellas — intended for protection against the sun — were popular from the 1840s onwards. This sort of outfit made few concessions to tropical conditions, and may even have contributed to the poor health which Speke and his colleagues endured. Inevitably, travellers would appear less smart at the end of a long expedition than they had at the beginning. When he reached Gondokoro, for example, Speke's companion Grant was described by Samuel Baker as being 'in honourable rags; his bare knees projecting through the remnants of trowsers that were an exhibition of rough industry in tailor's work'.

Fig 93



Fig 94



Fig 95



Fig 96



94. HENRY MORTON STANLEY 1871 A studio photograph taken in London shows Stanley in this rather more practical costume, which he was wearing when he met Livingstone at Ujiji in 1871. He tells us that he had changed into a new white flannel suit before entering Ujiji because his ordinary travelling clothes were ‘in tatters’, but the boots and the sun helmet — the latter also white, and specially chalked for the occasion — were routinely worn on the march. Another photograph taken at the end of the expedition shows him in an identical outfit, with the addition of the beard which he grew while in Africa. The cork sun helmet or ‘solar topee’ was a military fashion, first seen in India, which began to appear in Africa during the 1870s. These helmets came in numerous styles, differing in the height of the crown and the width of the brim. Stanley is wearing a cloth puggaree wrapped around; this was also an Indian-inspired fashion, which was popular with the British but was less often adopted by explorers from

other European countries (see also Figure 106).

By the time of his Emin Pasha Relief Expedition in 1887–89 Stanley had devised for himself an unusual outfit in pale khaki, including a jacket with frogging on the front, and a large white peaked cap, with a neck curtain and ventilation holes around the oversized crown to keep the wearer cool. The latter item inspired a new nickname among his Zanzibari followers: ‘the white cap’. His European officers appear to have favoured more conventional clothing — mainly baggy shirts and trousers in white or khaki.

In this portrait Stanley is carrying a Winchester repeater, rather than the big-game rifle associated with most explorers. Unlike many of his contemporaries he was a firm believer in the necessity for two types of gun — one for hunting, and the other for ‘defensive’ purposes. The question of armament was complicated by the fact that in parts of tropical Africa it was necessary to arm an expedition not only against human threats but also against wild animals. At least four species — the rhinoceros, buffalo, lion, and crocodile — were implicated in unprovoked attacks on caravans, which could sometimes cause serious disruption or loss of life. The man-eating lions which held up the building of the Uganda Railway in 1898 are well known, and on an earlier occasion Stanley was only saved from a pride of ten lions by the timely arrival of his askaris. Cameron’s entire caravan was routed by a charging buffalo in 1874, and nine years later Joseph Thomson’s pack donkeys were scattered by a similar attack. In some places, especially in the arid bush of northern Kenya, caravans were attacked by rhinoceroses with unnerving frequency. William Chanler referred to his march through this region as ‘a nightmare of continuous horror ... caused by the fact that ... all the rhinoceroses in East Africa seemed to have clustered about our pathway, and to have religiously devoted all their attentions and energies to charging us as frequently as possible.’ These beasts could not easily be killed with military calibre rifles — J.H. Patterson, for example, found that the bullets from his .303 would not even penetrate a rhino’s hide.

Therefore it was advisable for any traveller to equip himself with a battery of heavy big-game rifles. In addition, of course, hunting was an important motive for many explorers, whether for ivory, food, or simply ‘sport’. Until the 1870s hunting rifles were muzzle-loaders, either single or double-barrelled, but from then onwards breech-loading ‘Express’ rifles (so called from their high muzzle velocity) began to replace them. Inevitably ways were found of using these weapons in conflicts with human opponents too. Stanley sank canoes with his elephant gun on several occasions, and also adopted Baker’s tactic of loading it with small slugs for use as a shotgun at short range. However, in *How I Found Livingstone* he points out that such a gun was

not an ideal military weapon, being heavy, slow-firing, and difficult to shoot from a prone position. Von Hohnel confirms this from personal experience. He once tried to fire an elephant gun while lying down, but the recoil made the gun fly upwards and he sustained a serious injury to his nose from the hammers. Furthermore, 'Express' cartridges were extremely expensive. Therefore, for defence against hostile tribesmen, Stanley recommends a light but rapid firing Winchester 'sixteen-shooter' like the one shown here.

95. JOSEPH THOMSON 1883 Thomson appears in an illustration in his *Through Masai Land* wearing a sun helmet, a shirt with cravat, trousers, and gaiters, all in a pale (probably tan or khaki) shade. He also favoured tweed suits and white duck trousers. Like many of his fellow explorers he was a keen hunter of big game, and it was often the need for camouflage when stalking animals, rather than any military considerations, which encouraged the adoption of inconspicuous shades of clothing. By the 1880s khaki — another innovation from British India — had become popular for this purpose. Thomson is armed with an 'Express' rifle and a hunting knife.

96. COUNT SAMUEL TELEKI 1888 This reconstruction of Teleki is based on a portrait in von Hohnel's account of his 1887–88 expedition. The eccentric Count's preferred outfit for African travel comprised a battered old sun helmet, a shirt open to the waist, long trousers, and gaiters, all in various dirty shades of khaki. Like Thomson, he was equipped primarily with hunting in mind. He took at least eight heavy rifles of various calibres for his own personal use, but his preferred weapon was a double-barrelled breech-loading 8-bore elephant gun.

By the late 1880s many explorers had devised their own outfits, independent of military or civilian fashions, either on the basis of their own experience or following the recommendations of a growing number of books. Frederick Jackson, writing in 1894, advised hunters and explorers to take a Norfolk jacket, knickerbocker breeches, and sheepskin leggings instead of puttees — all in khaki in the dry weather, when the grass was yellow, and 'Indian Shikar cloth' in mixed green and brown for the wet season. There should never, he says, be a pocket on the right breast of the jacket, as it might catch on the stock of a rifle when it was being brought to the shoulder in a hurry, but cartridge loops should be sewn on both sides instead. A soft felt hat with a brim was preferable to a 'solar topee', which was easily knocked off when passing through the bush and became 'a heavy shapeless pulp' in the rain. Harry Johnston agreed about the unsuitability of sun helmets, and argued that 'to shield the body from the sun ... the only way is to carry a white umbrella, and this should

be done on almost all occasions except when to do such a thing would be positively ridiculous, as, for instance, in the middle of a battle’.

97. LIEUTENANT VON TIEDEMANN 1890 By the beginning of the 1890s a very different trend was in evidence, especially among German explorers. The distinction between exploring expeditions and military occupation was becoming blurred, and many of these men disregarded the practical suggestions of African veterans in favour of a more overtly military appearance. The photograph from which this figure is derived was posed in a studio before Carl Peters’ companion von Tiedemann — a serving German officer — left for Africa. It nevertheless shows the sort of outfit often associated with German explorers of the late 19th century. The sun helmet, tunic with stand-up collar, and trousers are all white.

A photograph taken later on at Mpwapwa shows von Tiedemann still wearing the white helmet and trousers, but with shoes instead of boots, and a darker (probably khaki) tunic. His superior Peters is shown in a very similar all-white outfit to that worn here. Von Tiedemann also devised a ceremonial uniform which he and Peters wore when meeting important leaders. This consisted of a white jacket, with red facings and gold embroidery on the sleeves and shoulders; white trousers with a broad gold stripe down the side, tucked into knee-length boots; a white helmet ‘adorned with bands of gold’; and a black and gold scarf. Other military officers frequently took their usual full dress uniforms with them for such occasions.

Fig 97



Fig 98



Fig 99



Fig 100



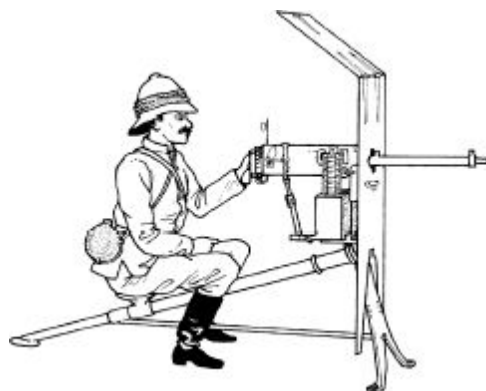
Fig 101



Fig 102



Fig 103



Like Peters, von Tiedemann possessed a sizeable arsenal of weapons: a Mauser Express rifle, a Lancaster repeater, a double-barrelled shotgun, and a six-shot revolver. The last had been a popular sidearm among explorers since Speke's day, although Johnston was scathing about its value, arguing that 'a revolver is not, as a rule, a very useful weapon, except for accidentally shooting oneself'.

98. CHARLES STOKES c.1890 Some Europeans who had spent a long time in Africa inevitably 'went native', which in practice meant adopting Arab dress and manners. This figure is based on a photograph of the missionary worker turned gun-runner Charles Stokes. He wears a white turban and gown, and a darker coloured Arab coat (probably red or blue) over European trousers and shoes. Such a costume was practical and comfortable, and it has been suggested that one reason for the Arabs' success as African travellers was the protection against both heat and malarial mosquitoes afforded by their long and voluminous layers of clothing. In the original photograph Stokes is unarmed. Here he has been given a Remington rifle, of which large numbers were traded by him and others throughout East Africa in the 1880s and 1890s. Other photographs show 'Bwana Stokesi' in more conventional European clothes: a broad-brimmed hat with white tunic and trousers when in German service in 1892, for example.

99–102. ASKARIS On the march, askaris might wear either native clothing like that of Figures 22–24 or a rudimentary uniform, supplied by wealthier employers or those with official backing. On some occasions they might be dressed up in more eye-catching costumes to make an impression on native rulers. For example, Speke's 'guard of honour' in their red flannel cloaks caused a sensation in Buganda in 1862, where such items had never been seen before. 'April', Grant's 'Hottentot' servant, was dressed in a green velvet shooting-coat and a red cap. On his march to Bagamoyo after the rescue of Emin Pasha, Stanley issued his personal body of 40 porters with 'flaming red blankets as robes of honour'. The servant who led the great man's donkey was resplendent in a red turban, red shirt, and red breeches. By contrast the askaris, like their masters, were often reduced almost to rags after a long expedition without resupply, although few were as dilapidated and half-starved as Stanley's men had been after their earlier march to Lake Albert in 1888, when their companions failed to recognise them but mistook them for local 'pagans'.

Figure 99 is Selim, Stanley's interpreter on his 1871 expedition, as illustrated in *How I Found Livingstone*. Selim — who was not a native African but a Christian from Palestine — wears a local costume

of striped collarless shirt and a white cap. Stanley provided each of his askaris on this expedition with a flintlock musket and 200 rounds of ammunition.

Figures 100 and 100a are from Cameron's *Across Africa*, and illustrate the men who accompanied him in 1873. Whereas Stanley's men had been armed only with flintlocks, Cameron's were equipped with Snider carbines. They were originally issued with red patrol jackets, red fezzes, white shirts, and cummerbunds. However, Cameron's illustrations invariably show them wearing this rather more practical outfit, consisting of a white turban and a red shirt over a long Arab *kanzu*. Figure 100's rank chevrons, and the white patches on the front of the shirts, which performed a similar function, are also shown in a picture in the *Illustrated London News* published during March 1876.

Figure 101 is a Somali from Peters' German Emin Pasha Relief Expedition of 1889–90. He wears a uniform which is very similar to that of the DOAG askaris (see Figure 115). It consisted of a red fez, a white shirt (with coloured bands in black, white, and red), and trousers which it seems, from the illustrations in Peters' book, could be either white or a slightly darker colour — probably khaki or grey. His rifle is a German Model 71/84. During his escape from the Masai after the fight at Elbejet, Peters also improvised 'uniforms' (or at least headgear) for his porters out of red cloth, with to intimidate the enemy by making them look like askaris.

Figure 102 is one of Lugard's 'Zanzibar levy' which accompanied him to Uganda in 1891, as illustrated in his *The Rise of Our East African Empire*. The two companies of levies were both clothed in short white jerseys and white loincloths. They were distinguished by their cuffs and the coloured patch on the back of the jersey, which were blue for one company and red for the other. Lugard says that these patches were only 12 ins (305 mm) square, but the reconstruction follows his illustration, which shows them as rectangular in shape and somewhat larger. The figure's rifle is a Snider. Lugard's colleague Jackson, who states that the Snider was the safest and most reliable weapon to place in the hands of native troops, recommends arming the askaris with long rifles and the porters with carbines.

A trusted askari would be given the task of carrying the expedition's flag, which was usually that of the leader's native country. In regions nominally subject to Zanzibar the Sultan's all-red banner was also customarily flown, and other flags might be taken along in special circumstances. Stanley, a naturalised American citizen, always flew the US flag, but on his 1871 expedition his British companions received permission to carry a Union Jack in addition.

Cameron was accompanied by both the Union Jack and the white ensign.

103. MAXIM GUN c.1888 This gun was donated by its inventor, Hiram Maxim, to Stanley's Emin Pasha Relief Expedition in 1887, and accompanied it across Africa from the mouth of the Congo to Zanzibar. Stanley remarks on the 'moral influence' of its mere appearance in Ankole, and on the amazement and terror of a young Banyankole prince for whom it was demonstrated. It was used against the Sukuma at Ikoma in September 1889. This picture is based on one reproduced in the *Illustrated London News* in February 1887. Another drawing in Stanley's *In Darkest Africa* differs only in minor details. The shield was designed to protect the operator against dropping fire from arrows as well as bullets, hence the rearward sloping section at the top. If faced with high-velocity rifle fire, the top and bottom sections could be turned up or down to make a single central section of double thickness. A tank at the rear contained sufficient water to cool the gun for 2,000 rounds of firing. The author describes the shield and tripod mounting as 'light but effective', and says that the entire equipment could be carried on the march by four men. Allegedly (though improbably) the whole assemblage could be got into action, with the gun mounted, in ten seconds.

The same gun was later acquired by Lugard, who used it (without the shield) in Uganda, but found that it jammed so often that it was almost useless. This contrasts with the experience of Stanley, who reports no serious malfunctions on his expedition (although he says that it was important to keep the cartridge belt dry at all times). The gun or its ammunition may have been mistreated in their journeys across the continent, but see the remarks under Figure 114.

BRITISH EAST AFRICA

East Africa had its origin in an offer made by Sultan Barghash of Zanzibar to Sir William Mackinnon of the British East Africa Association in May 1887. Barghash was alarmed at the way in which the Germans were taking over his possessions on the mainland, and he wished to keep the support of his British allies. Therefore he offered the Association control of a strip of coast ten miles (16.1 km) deep between the Uмба River and Kipini. The British government had refused to give its backing to a similar offer ten years earlier, but it now agreed to do so rather than allow Germany to occupy the whole region. Association agents quickly made treaties with the Galla, Kamba, and other tribes in the hinterland, and by the beginning of 1888 they had acquired sovereign rights over an area extending 200 miles (322 km) inland. In April of that year the association became the Imperial British East Africa Company.

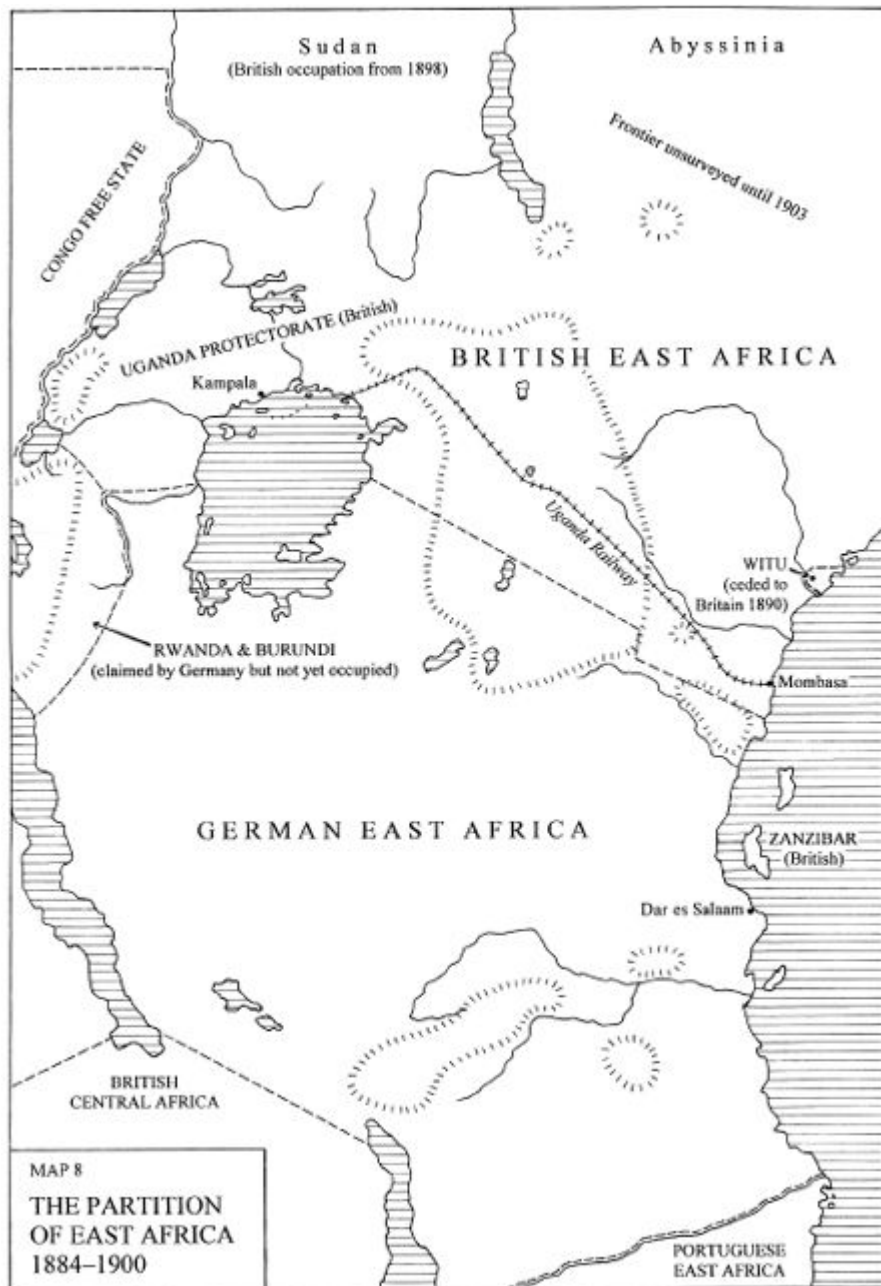
THE IBEA FORCES

The Company raised its own armed force locally, relying mainly on Swahili and Somali volunteers. There were also some Sudanese recruited direct from Egypt by Captain W.H. Williams, who became Lugard's second-in-command in Buganda, and in 1891 a contingent of Indian police arrived. At first the Company's military strength was negligible. During the Abushiri War against the Germans in 1888 the Arabs in British territory threatened war over the loss of their slaves, who had taken refuge with the missionaries. Realising that it would be unable to resist if attacked, the Company was forced to avoid trouble by paying the Arabs for the appropriation of their 'property'.

The quality of the equipment and training given to IBEA levies varied dramatically. At the beginning of his expedition in 1891 Lugard described one third of his 270 armed Zanzibari porters as brave but undisciplined, another third as 'indifferent', and the rest as 'absolutely useless for fighting'. Yet after they had been trained by Williams he reports that they understood bugle commands, could aim and fire accurately by volleys, and knew how to advance in open order by rushes, making use of cover. Williams' own Sudanese were similarly well drilled, and regularly practised assaults against imaginary positions. Bugle calls were used to control them when operating in the dense grass and banana groves of Buganda. The best fighters among Lugard's Zanzibaris were formed into the 'Zanzibari levy', which consisted of two companies of 70 men each, while the Sudanese

formed a third company of about 100 men. Later Lugard used these troops to garrison a string of forts along the border with Bunyoro, reorganising them into a company of Sudanese veterans, a company of newly recruited Sudanese, and one of Zanzibaris.

In less strategically important posts the garrisons were less well trained. In 1892 J.W. Gregory visited a fort at Tsavo which was held by 12 Baluchis, formerly of the Zanzibar army, who were so untrustworthy that if their commanding officer (a young Portuguese half-caste) had to be away from the fort for any length of time he was obliged to lock up all the ammunition. Gerald Portal, who was there a year later, describes this same garrison as 'the veritable scum of the earth'. Many of the Company's recruits brought with them their own muzzle-loading guns, but rifles were usually issued — often in large numbers — to the participants in major expeditions. For example, Frederick Jackson's caravan in 1889 contained 500 men, mostly porters, of whom 400 were equipped with Sniders. Lugard's porters, as well as his 50 Sudanese and Somali askaris, also carried Sniders.



THE WITU CAMPAIGN

The town of Witu, situated in a forest a few miles from the coast north of Mombasa, became a focus of international rivalry in the 1880s. It had long been effectively independent of Zanzibari rule under its own

‘Sultan’, Fumo Bakari, whom Gregory describes as ‘a Swahili outlaw’ but who in fact belonged to the ancient ruling dynasty of Pate. Fumo Bakari’s followers were well equipped with guns and were drawn from a variety of sources, but were generally known as *watoro*, which was a term used for runaway slaves. Witu was notorious as a nest of bandits who raided the local tribes and coastal plantations, and in 1885 the Sultan of Zanzibar despatched 600 of his own troops to suppress it. However, the Germans already had traders there, and Bismarck protested against the attack, declaring Witu a German Protectorate. By 1887 there was a small German garrison in the town, but Fumo Bakari, relying on their protection, continued to launch attacks on his neighbours.

The Zanzibaris retaliated by including the strip of land along the coast east of Witu, including the town of Lamu, in the territory which they ceded to the IBEA Company. This effectively isolated Witu and made it useless as a base for German advances into the hinterland, but it also brought the Company into conflict with Fumo Bakari. So when in 1890 the British demanded that the Witu ‘Sultan’ destroy some illegal customs posts which he had built on Zanzibari territory, the Germans decided that it was not worth starting a war over the town and advised him to obey. A furious Fumo Bakari attempted to take as hostages 11 Germans who were in the town, but they tried to shoot their way out and were massacred.

The Capture of Witu, October 1890

By this time the Anglo-German Agreement of 1890 had placed Witu itself inside British territory, so ironically it was now the responsibility of the British to avenge the deaths of the Germans who had defied them. The Company troops in the area were obviously inadequate for the task, so a punitive naval expedition was despatched under Admiral Fremantle. This consisted of eight Royal Navy warships (the *Boadicea*, *Cossack*, *Brisk*, *Turquoise*, *Kingfisher*, *Redbreast*, *Pigeon*, and *Humber*); the hired merchant vessels *Juba* and *Somali*; 700 sailors and Marines from the ships’ companies; 100 Indian police in the employ of the British East Africa Company; 100 Zanzibari soldiers; four 7-pdr field guns; four machine-guns; and 1,000 porters. As an example of the sort of artillery support which could be delivered by the gunboats, HMS *Redbreast* (805 tons) carried six 4-inch breech-loaders; two 3-pdr quick-firers; two Nordenfelt machine-guns; and a boat gun.

This was an overwhelmingly strong force, particularly as regards the large number of British personnel deployed. Fumo Bakari, however, was determined to resist, and assured his men that the British were poor soldiers who could only fight at sea. After landing at

Formosa Bay the main body of the expedition encamped on the beach. An advance guard of about 300 men, with the artillery, was placed a few miles inland. Around midnight on 25 October Fumo Bakari's troops, numbering about 500 riflemen and 2,000 spearmen, encircled the camp of the advance guard and launched an attack. The fire of the *watoro* rifles was ineffective, and although they approached to within 50 yds (46 m) they were beaten off after half an hour's fighting by the fire of the sailors and machine-guns. The following day the entire British force advanced to the edge of a swamp about three miles (4.8 km) from Witu, where they were again attacked. Deploying into a skirmish line, with the Marines on the right, they quickly pushed the enemy back. The account in the *Illustrated London News* singled out the Marines as being 'particularly conspicuous for steady firing and orderly advance', although the resistance which they faced does not seem to have been serious.

As the British approached the town on the 27th the Witu *watoro* came out to fight yet again, but were driven off with heavy losses. Fremantle's men then redeployed for an assault on the town, which was surrounded by dense jungle. A rocket set fire to the buildings, and the sailors stormed the town, but after blowing in the main gate with guncotton they discovered that the place had been evacuated. They blew up a huge store of gunpowder and ammunition, destroyed Fumo Bakari's palace, and returned to the coast. Their total casualties for the campaign were 12 wounded. Witu was garrisoned by a company of Indian troops at IBEA Company expense, and was taken over by the government in 1893. In 1901 Gregory reported that fugitive *watoro* from the town were still harassing the garrison from the forests to the north.

THE MAZRUI REBELLION, 1895–96

After their expulsion from Mombasa by Seyyid Said in 1837, two branches of the Mazrui clan had continued to hold out in their strongholds at Gazi and Takaungu, north of their former capital. In the 1890s they came under the control of the IBEA Company, but soon became disaffected because of the anti-Islamic activities of missionaries and the growing threat to slavery. Naturally the British represented the Mazruis simply as bandits and slavers, but from the Swahili point of view they were the legitimate rulers of the country, tracing their ancestry back to Hamis, the founder of the Takaungu Mazruis in the 1830s.

When Hamis' son Selim died early in 1895 the Company ignored the normal rules of succession and appointed a pro-British Arab as chief of Takaungu. The rightful heir, Selim's nephew Mbarak,

moved to the nearby settlement of Gonjoro and assembled an army of 1,200 men. A combined Company and Zanzibari expedition soon drove him from Gonjoro, and he fled to Gazi to join the Mazrui chief there, the veteran rebel Mbarak of Gazi. This Mbarak was at first reluctant to support his namesake because he knew that Gazi, being on the coast and so in range of British gunboats, was untenable in the event of hostilities. Nevertheless, when a naval expedition from Mombasa led by Sir Arthur Hardinge approached to arrest the rebels, Mbarak decided to join them and fled to the stronghold of Mwele, five days' march to the west.

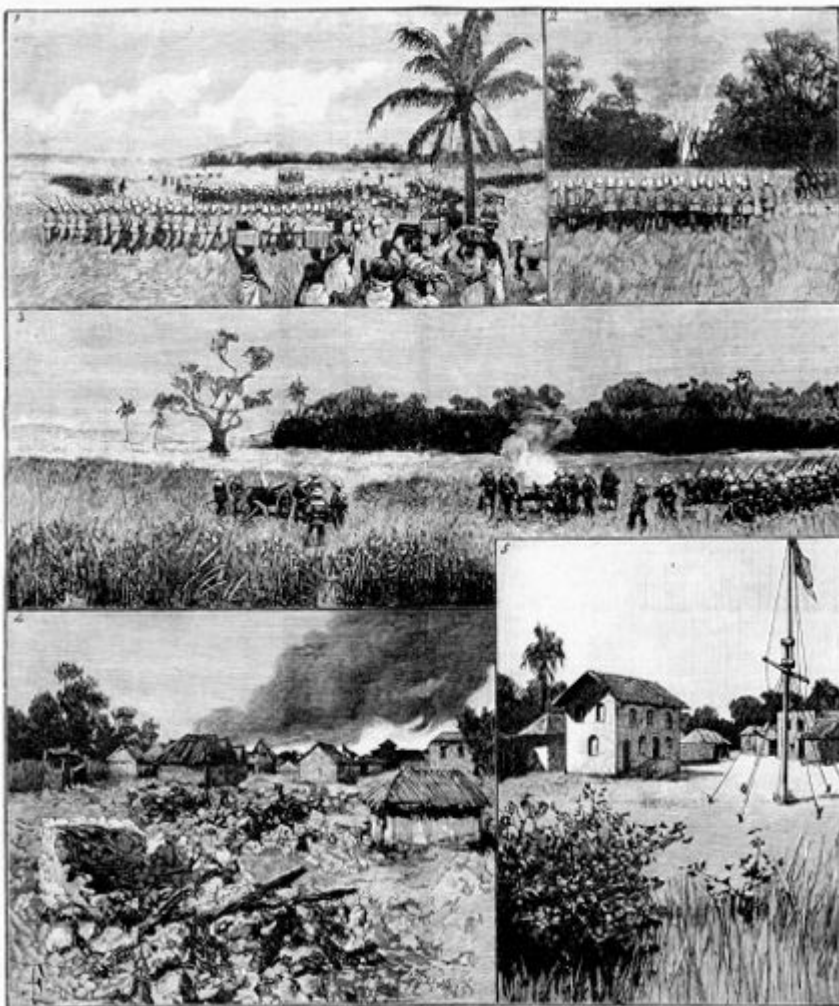
THE ILLUSTRATED LONDON NEWS

REPRODUCED BY THE GEORGE FREDERICKS FOR TRANSMISSION ABROAD.

No. 2694.—VOL. XXVII.

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 6, 1890.

TWO SIXPENCE.
WHOLE SHEETS: 3d. 6d. 9d.



1. Landing British at Witu.

2. Marching up the River.

3. The River at Witu.

4. Landing of Witu.

5. The British Camp.

British sailors and Marines advance on Witu, October 1890. (Illustrated London News, 6 December 1890)

The Battle of Mwele, August 1895

In 1895 Rear-Admiral Rawson of the Royal Navy, operating in

conjunction with a contingent of the Zanzibar army under General Mathews, was sent to capture Mwele. The *Illustrated London News*, recounting the events of this campaign, described the elderly and reluctant Mbarak of Gazi as 'the head of a confederacy of predatory tribal chieftains, who dodges about from one stockaded camp or rude fortress to another, beaten repeatedly wherever he chooses to await an attack, and escapes being caught by a timely retreat into pathless tropical jungles'. In fact he was still only 18 miles (29 km) inland. The British forces comprised: five cruisers (*St George*, *Phoebe*, *Racoon*, *Barrosa*, and *Blonde*); 400 sailors and Marines from the ships; 60 Sudanese askaris; 50 local askaris; a 7-pdr field gun; a rocket tube; two Maxim guns (a report in the *Illustrated London News* says four); and 800 porters.

It is not reported exactly how many Zanzibaris accompanied them, but as the *Illustrated London News* gives a total of 600 for the sailors, Marines, Sudanese, and Zanzibaris, there must have been around 90. They were commanded in action by another former British officer, J.W. Tritton. A preliminary reconnaissance had been made by an additional 150 Sudanese, supported by some sailors and Marines from HMS *Racoon* and HMS *Phoebe*. The main body formed a column which ex-tended for about three miles (4.8 km) when on the march.

Early on 16 August, while the head of the column was crossing a shoulder of Ndolo Mountain (but the rear had not yet left the previous night's camp) it was ambushed at two points simultaneously. At the front the enemy opened fire from cover at a range of 30 yds (27 m), but were eventually driven off by Maxim and artillery fire. The other attack also failed, though General Mathews was wounded. The next day the expedition reached Mwele from the west. The stronghold was in fact a group of 48 separate stockades hidden in dense forest on top of a hill. A preliminary bombardment was attempted with the single field gun and a few rockets, but this was obviously hopeless; the entire position was three miles in circumference, and only two of the stockades were visible from below the hill. Rawson therefore sent part of his force, comprising sailors, Marines, and a Maxim gun, under the command of Captain MacGill, round to the eastern side of the hill while he prepared to attack simultaneously from the west.

Mbarak of Takaungu, on whose behalf the revolt had begun, had already fled, but Mbarak of Gazi orchestrated a determined resistance. The Arabs opened fire from the stockades when the attackers were between 50 and 80 yds (46–73 m) away, and it was soon clear that the defences could not be assaulted frontally. The total number of British casualties is not known, but it must have been significant; though only one man was killed, two aides were wounded at Admiral Rawson's side. The sailors and the Sudanese then forced

their way through the jungle and outflanked each stockade in turn, eventually forcing the defenders to flee after two hours of fighting. Mbarak's military commander, Zahran bin Rashid, was shot through the head by a Sudanese soldier while defending the main gate into the town of Mwele itself. More than a ton of gunpowder, as well as other ammunition, was captured. Rawson then ordered the defences to be destroyed, and avenues to be blown in the surrounding forest with guncotton in order to prevent the position being reoccupied.

Two months later, however, the Arabs had rallied, and the country around Mombasa was in a state of open revolt. On 17 October the Zanzibari garrison occupying Gazi sallied out to attack a stockade at Mgobani. The Zanzibaris were routed, and their British commander, Captain Lawrence, was shot dead. Soon afterwards a British tax-collector based at Takaungu, with only 50 men, defeated 200 rebels at Mtawpa, 12 miles (19.3 km) outside Mombasa. The situation remained critical, however, with most of the coastal peoples now coming out in support of the Mazruis.

By the end of 1895, despite the replacement of Company rule by a formal Protectorate, effective British authority on the coast was confined to the ports. The naval brigade was irresistible in battle, but it could not operate far from the sea, nor move fast enough to bring the rebels to bay. On 30 December, therefore, 300 Indian soldiers were landed to support the navy. Their first operation was a failure; they landed at Mtawpa and quickly drove off the enemy, but on following them inland were deliberately led astray by their guides and narrowly escaped destruction from thirst. During the next three months the Indians — reinforced by an additional battalion in March 1896 — quartered the area in several columns, but Mbarak and the other rebels avoided pitched battles, instead harassing the rearguards and slipping between the columns to attack undefended towns in the rear.

Typical of numerous actions was one on 4 April 1896, when a battalion under Colonel Pearson stormed the village of Mweni in a carefully prepared night attack, to discover that the only inhabitant was an old woman. However, the Mazruis were gradually being weakened by exhaustion and the destruction of their plantations, and on 20 April Mbarak gave up the struggle. He crossed the border and surrendered to the Germans, who allowed his followers to settle in Uzaramo.

THE BOMBARDMENT OF ZANZIBAR, 1896

This often quoted 'shortest war in history' resulted from a succession dispute after the death of Sultan Hamid of Zanzibar. The British

authorities nominated Hamoud bin Muhammad as his successor, but the son of Barghash, Sayyid Khalid, proclaimed himself Sultan with the support of most of the local people. Khalid assembled an army of 2,500 Arab soldiers and a collection of assorted artillery comprising a Maxim gun, a Gatling, two 12-pdrs, and an old muzzle-loading cannon dating from 1658.

Against him the British brought four warships, 400 sailors, 100 Marines, 400 askaris, and the Zanzibari regular army, now commanded by General Arthur Raikes. The ships opened fire at 9:00 a.m. on 27 August, and the bombardment was virtually unopposed. At 1:30 p.m., after about 500 Zanzibaris had been killed for no British losses, Khalid surrendered and fled to the German Consulate, leaving Hamoud to be proclaimed Sultan. The lasting effect of the war was to complete the informal British domination of Zanzibar.

THE WANGA EXPEDITION, 1896

This column marched from Wanga on the East African Coast in February 1896 against another Swahili rebel, Aziz, and is worth recording as an example of the numerous smaller naval brigades which operated along the coast. It comprised: two gunboats (the *Widgeon* and *Thrush*), 40 sailors and Marines, an unknown number of 'Indian troops', two rocket tubes, and two Maxim guns.

THE EAST AFRICAN RIFLES

In 1895 the British government officially took over the territory of the bankrupt IBEA Company, dividing it into the British East Africa Protectorate — roughly corresponding to the eastern half of what is now Kenya — and the Uganda Protectorate, which then incorporated most of western Kenya as well as Uganda itself. The East African Rifles were formed the same year to replace the Company troops in the first of these regions. Their main strategic role was to guard the Uganda Railway from Mombasa to Lake Victoria, which was still under construction. They were based at the former Portuguese Fort Jesus in Mombasa, and their first commanding officer was Major G.P. Hatch. He took over a collection of about 600 Company troops, which were split up into countless small ad hoc detachments and had very little in the way of formal organisation. These were reformed into a single battalion, whose full authorised establishment was: 300 Swahili askaris; 100 Sudanese, who had been sent from Uganda to guard the railway (soon afterwards increased to 255); 300 Punjabis; 15 trained gunners and some medical staff, all transferred from the Indian Army; and another 200 men of mixed origins.

Three hundred of these troops were deployed to garrison a

string of forts in Jubaland, along the frontier with the Somalis to the north. The Somalis, and to a lesser extent the Gallas whom they had been driving ahead of them during their southward expansion, were regarded at the time as a significant threat to the Protectorate, although the feared invasion never materialised. The regiment's first campaign was against the Kamba in 1896, when it was supported by 800 Masai allies. In 1898 it was reorganised into eight companies — five of Sudanese and three of Swahilis — in addition to the Indian contingent. In October 1900 the Indians were withdrawn and replaced by a fourth Swahili company. In 1902 the battalion was incorporated, along with the Uganda Rifles, into the King's African Rifles.

THE UGANDA RIFLES

The Uganda Rifles had their origin in the improvised forces which had been deployed in Uganda under Lugard, Macdonald, and Colville in the early 1890s. Uganda was formally declared a British Protectorate in 1894, and during the following year the troops employed there were formed into a regular battalion. These were mostly Sudanese from the garrisons which had once been under the command of Emin Pasha and had been recruited by Lugard in 1891. Their core was still the dwindling band of surviving regular soldiers from the northern Sudan, who had been trained in European-style drill, still carried Egyptian flags, and maintained as far as possible the procedures of the Egyptian army. However, their cumulative losses in years of fighting against the Mahdists had been heavy — Lugard says that in 1891 there were 600 left out of an original 3,000 — and the gaps in the ranks had been filled with men recruited from among the non-combatant camp followers, slaves, and local tribesmen.

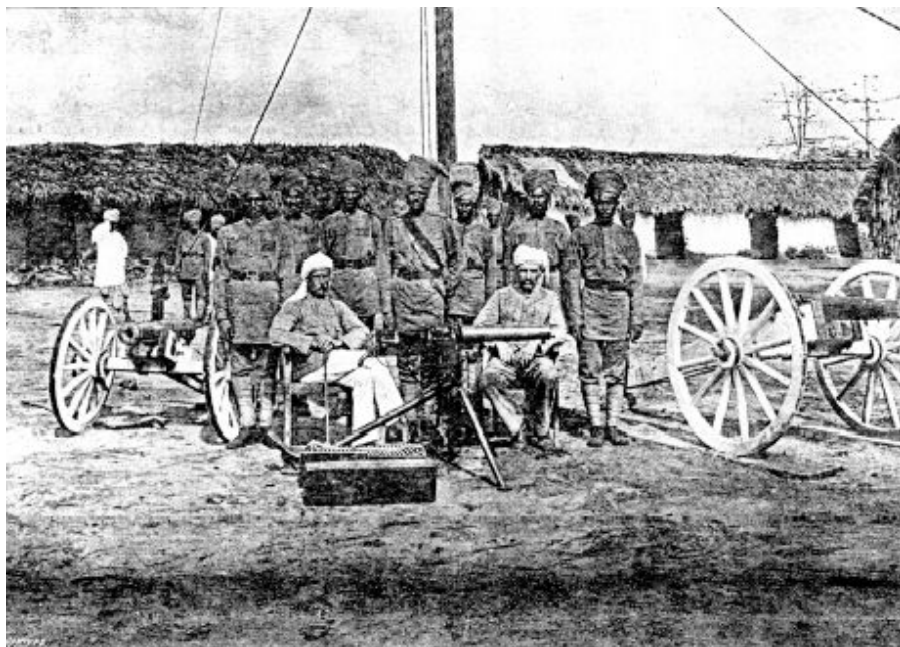
Colville's forces in December 1894 had consisted of 600 mostly Sudanese regulars (although some of Lugard's Zanzibaris still remained), plus 200 reservists. It is doubtful whether the latter were of much real military value. Lugard says that the formation of a reserve had been a ploy devised by Major Macdonald in 1893 to keep some of the potentially mutinous Sudanese out of trouble; he had placed 300 of them on half pay and allowed them to cultivate land in the vicinity of the forts, where they could be watched closely. These 800 men were now organised into ten companies. Five of these, the 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th, and 7th, were regarded as elite, and (along with the 9th) were repeatedly sent out on the exhausting expeditions against Bunyoro and the Baganda Muslims, while their comrades garrisoned the forts inside Uganda. This was one of the reasons why the 4th, 7th, and 9th companies mutinied in 1897 (see below). Another reason was the difference in pay between the Uganda Rifles, whose men received

4 rupees each per month (usually several months in arrears), and their equivalents in the East African Rifles, whose monthly rate was 16 rupees for African personnel and 18 for Indians.

In February 1899, after the mutiny had been suppressed, another reorganisation took place. There were now 36 officers, 21 British NCOs, and 1,952 men in total, divided into 16 companies. (Figures given for 1900 are very similar, apart from the origin of the NCOs: 42 British officers, 21 Sikh NCOs, 400 Indians, and 1,400 African askaris.) The core of the force was the 1st Battalion, which originally consisted of 402 Indian volunteers under British officers, probably in four companies. Seven of the other companies were recruited from Swahilis, Somalis, and local Baganda, and the remaining loyal Sudanese made up the rest. Even these 'loyal' Sudanese were regarded as undisciplined, however, and the families who accompanied them caused trouble with the local people by persistent stealing, so over the next two years these troops were gradually phased out.

THE SUDANESE MUTINY, 1897-98

In 1897, an expedition under Major J.R.L. Macdonald was sent up from the coast to prevent a possible French move into the southern Sudan. Its strength included ten European officers, 50 Sikhs, two companies of Swahili askaris, and seven Maxim guns. Three companies of Sudanese, the 4th, 7th, and 9th, were despatched from Uganda to meet Macdonald at the Eldama Ravine in the Rift Valley. These companies were already exhausted after several successive campaigns; furthermore their NCOs had been punished merely for requesting their arrears of pay. They now requested a meeting with Macdonald, but were brusquely dismissed. H.M. Stanley, now a British Member of Parliament, later remarked that Macdonald's orders were to treat all native tribes with consideration and respect, but that if he had been instructed to treat his own escort in the same way the mutiny would never have happened.



*The small but heavily armed British garrison of Witu, photographed in 1893 or 1894. The soldiers are part of a Sikh contingent. (J.W. Gregory, *The Great Rift Valley*, 1896)*

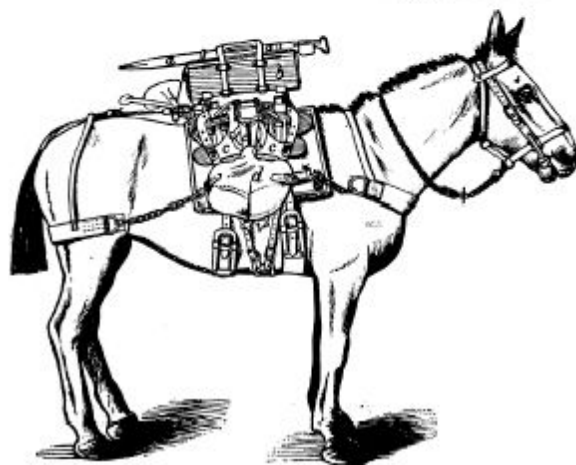
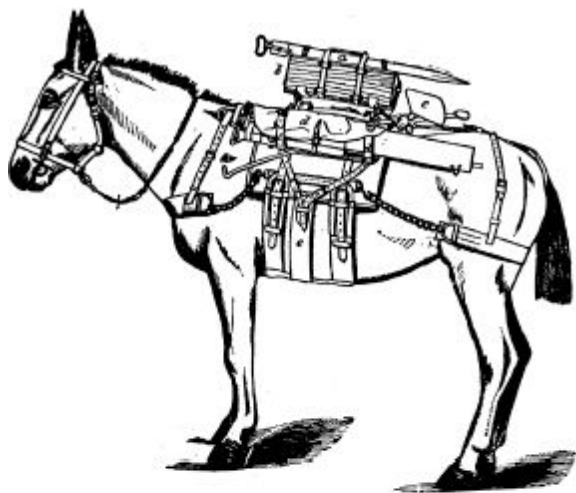
Believing that they had a genuine grievance, the troops from Uganda complained to the Commissioner at Eldama Station. This was technically insubordinate, but it was the overreaction of one of Macdonald's officers, Captain Kirkpatrick, which provoked open mutiny. He called on the men to lay down their arms, and when they refused he ordered a Maxim gun to open fire on them. The official account states that this gun jammed, but according to a persistent and plausible rumour the crew in fact pretended that it had malfunctioned in order to avoid having to fire on their comrades. Kirkpatrick then ordered the garrison of the station to shoot down the Sudanese with their rifles, but they all fired high, and no one was hit.

The Battle of Lubwa's, 19 October 1897

The three Sudanese companies then marched off to a small station called Lubwa's, 80 miles (129 km) away, which they reached on 16 October. They persuaded the Sudanese askaris of the garrison there to join them, increasing their numbers to about 500, and took prisoner three British officers, including Major Thruston, a veteran of the wars against Kabarega. Macdonald, leading a force of 18 Sikhs and the two companies of Swahilis, caught up with them and blockaded the fort, but was almost taken by surprise on the 19th when the mutineers launched a dawn attack in an attempt to break out.

Frederick Jackson, who was with Macdonald, later praised the Sudanese attack as 'well thought out'. One column under two of the Sudanese officers, Mbaruk and Bilal, attacked frontally up the hill on which the British camp was situated, while another group, led by Suliman, climbed the ridge further to the mutineers' left and attacked from the flank. This tactic nearly succeeded. Although the Sikhs brought two Maxims into action against the enemy to their front and stopped them, Suliman got his men into position and charged the askaris under Macdonald's command, shouting 'The Swahilis are women, and will run!' But they held firm, and Macdonald ordered them to hold their fire until the enemy were within 50 yds (46 m), when their first volley killed Suliman and brought the attack to a halt.

In the next few hours the mutineers launched seven more attacks on the British position, and during the battle they were joined by 200 Baganda Muslims, who according to Jackson taunted the defenders 'in a very obscene and suggestive manner'. A.B. Lloyd, who was caught up in the fighting at Lubwa's, describes the rebel tactics as consisting of a series of swift rushes, culminating in a volley at 30 yards' range. Macdonald's men were down to their last few rounds of ammunition when at last the attacks faltered, and the Major ordered a bayonet attack which drove the enemy back inside the fort with an estimated loss of 100 men. The mutineers then ended all hope of a negotiated settlement by shooting their three British prisoners.



A British Maxim gun mounted on a pack mule for colonial operations. The annotation on the left side view denotes '(a) spare gun barrel and case; (b) spare-part box; (c) trail seat; (d) hanger, gun, with leather cover; (e) girth, web, for hanger'; and that on the right side view '(a) spare gun barrel and case; (b) spare-part box; (c) tripod; (e) cover, tripod'. (From the official Handbook for the .303" Maxim, 1901)

Macdonald then laid siege to Lubwa's for nearly three months, with the help of a party of 1,600 loyal Baganda under Apolo Kaggwa. There was continuous sniping and skirmishing, in which two British officers, and what Lugard describes as 'a very large number' of the Baganda, were killed. In Uganda itself, meanwhile, other Baganda factions rose in revolt, and although the remaining Sudanese there remained loyal they were disarmed as a precaution. Luckily for the British, serious trouble in Uganda was avoided by astute diplomacy, but Macdonald was forced to take 200 men to pacify the province of Buddu, leaving a weakened force under Captain Woodward to continue the blockade of Lubwa's.

On 28 October and again on 24 November the mutineers defeated with heavy losses British attempts to storm the fort. Then, on 9 January 1898, they succeeded in breaking out, 'in a leisurely manner' according to Lugard, as Woodward did not have enough men to blockade the fort properly. They then marched north-west to Lake Kioga, where they hoped to link up with sympathisers from Buganda and Bunyoro. These included 2,400 musketeers led by King Mwanga, who had returned from exile and was now also in revolt against the British. Meanwhile contingents from the East African Rifles had been sent west to reinforce Macdonald: 80 askaris under Captain Harrison made a march of 360 miles (579 km) in 19 days, while several more detachments, including Indian troops, were sent up from the coast on the partially completed Uganda Railway.

The Battle of Kabagambe, 24 February 1898

Macdonald finally cornered the Sudanese at Kabagambe, in the marshes near Lake Kioga, on 18 February. He then returned to Kampala, leaving Captain Harrison in command. Harrison's force consisted of the Sikhs and Swahilis who had marched from Lubwa's, less some detachments taken away by Macdonald, plus an unknown number of Apolo Kaggwa's surviving Baganda levies, a single Maxim gun, and a recently arrived reinforcement of 150 Indian troops. The rebel forces were estimated at about 600 Sudanese and 200 Baganda Muslims. All of the former, and probably many of the latter, were armed with breech-loading rifles. They also had a captured Maxim, but this does not seem to have been used in the ensuing battle, either because it malfunctioned or because it had already been abandoned on the march.

The mutineers had built a well fortified defensive position, with the approaches guarded by what they believed were impassable swamps, but on the 24th Harrison led his men across a wide stretch of this swamp in a gruelling 17-hour forced march, and attacked them from an unexpected direction. The mutineers launched a bayonet charge, but the British troops stood firm, drove them back with volley fire, and then counter-attacked. The defenders fell back into their stockade, where they became mixed up with a panic-stricken crowd of their own women. According to Lugard, Harrison brought up the Maxim but decided not to use it because of the presence of the women. The position was therefore taken by an assault with the bayonet, in which one British officer, Captain Maloney, was killed, and Lieutenant Osborne was wounded. Over 100 of the mutineers were killed and the remainder dispersed into the swamps. Lugard gives the total casualties of the Protectorate forces during the mutiny

as four British officers killed and three wounded, with 125 regular soldiers dead or wounded. The last pockets of resistance were not finally subdued until 1901, but the Battle of Kabagambe put an end to the threat to British rule in Uganda.

FIGURES

104. BRITISH NAVAL OFFICER c.1889 Until 1890, the Royal Navy's uniforms were 'regulated', but not 'standardised'. This meant that officers and men supplied much of their own equipment, and within prescribed limits a certain amount of variation was accepted. Thus, for example, gaiters could be black, brown, or white (although the most popular colour appears to have been a yellowish tan) and leather equipment might appear in varying shades of black or brown. This figure, taken from an 1889 illustration of an anti-slavery patrol in the *Illustrated London News*, wears the normal officer's dark blue jacket with a white shirt, cap, and trousers. He carries a .476 Enfield revolver — a large calibre weapon renowned for its stopping power — on a lanyard. During the 1880s there was continual skirmishing all along the coast between naval patrols and Arab slavers. In October 1888, for example, a Lieutenant Cooper was killed in a gun battle in the harbour at Zanzibar itself.

105. BRITISH SAILOR c.1889 This figure is based on the same source as the last, and *Illustrated London News* illustrations published in November 1895 which show a naval landing party occupying Mwele. He is wearing a white tropical outfit with brown leather equipment, and a straw 'sennet' hat with the brim turned up in the characteristic style of British sailors. The hat ribbon and collar are blue, the latter trimmed with white. He is armed with a Martini Henry rifle. By 1890 the Navy had officially adopted the magazine Lee Metford, but as the issue of new small arms usually had to wait until a ship returned home for refitting, the crews of many smaller vessels in the Indian Ocean fought on with the older rifles for several more years. Detail 105a is from the same source, and wears what appears to be a white hat with the brim turned down. This picture also shows the front view of the collar.



Fig 105



Fig 106





106. BRITISH ARMY OFFICER 1890s The source for this figure is a photograph of Captain R. Portal — son of Sir Gerald — taken in Uganda in 1893. He appears to be wearing the khaki uniform which was standard by this time for both the Army and the Royal Marines, but his jacket is a darker shade than his helmet and breeches. He is wearing high leather boots, but khaki puttees were a popular alternative. On campaign the regulation uniform was often modified by shortages of equipment and the demands of the climate. Colonel Colville of the Grenadier Guards, for example, described his own unprepossessing appearance during the 1893–94 campaign against Bunyoro ‘in an old karkee coat, dilapidated breeches and gaiters, his feet bandaged in dirty rags’.

Detail 106a is from the same photograph as the main figure. He is wearing a white sun helmet with a metal spike, and what is probably a khaki puggaree wound around it. None of the other figures in the group have the spike fixed to their helmets, and it would almost certainly be removed on campaign because of its awkwardness when traversing thick bush. Detail 106b shows a khaki turban taken from a photograph printed in the *Illustrated London News* in June 1898, showing the officers of an unnamed Indian regiment recently raised for service in Uganda.

107 & 108. ASKARIS OF THE IMPERIAL BRITISH EAST AFRICA COMPANY The IBEA Company was perpetually short of money, and no attempt to issue a formal uniform, or to standardise weaponry or other equipment, was ever made. Many of the askaris in the company’s service campaigned in their traditional dress, and would have resembled Figures 20, 23, 24, and 100. Others wore only ad hoc insignia issued by the leader of a particular expedition (see the

caption to Figure 102). A photograph from the early 1890s, for example, shows an IBEA mail caravan escorted by askaris in what appear to be all-white uniforms, apart from their puttees and fezzes, which are darker (probably blue and red respectively). Figure 107, from the same source as 102, is a Swahili soldier serving in Uganda in the early 1890s. He combines a military-style jacket — presumably in white or khaki — and leather equipment with a cotton loincloth. His head and feet are bare (but see the note on footwear under Figure 30).

The original of Figure 108 appeared in the *Illustrated London News* in October 1895. He is a locally recruited member of a naval expedition from Mombasa, and has obviously been issued with a limited amount of military equipment for this campaign. He appears to be dressed all in white, and although the original picture seems to show gaiters he is barefooted. His rifle, like that of Figure 107, is the ubiquitous Snider.

British officials of the IBEA Company wore typical civilian dress. A photograph of Lugard's expedition in 1890 shows one man in a floppy broad-brimmed hat, one in a peaked cap with a white neck-flap, and one in what looks like a battered old school cap. A similar cap is worn by Frederick Jackson in a photograph of a treaty conference with the Kikuyu in 1889.

109. SIKH SOLDIER 1890s This figure is based on a photograph in Harry Johnston's *British Central Africa*, and shows a Sikh soldier on campaign in the Lake Nyasa region in the early 1890s. A photograph by J.W. Gregory of the garrison of Witu (see p.167) shows that the same uniform — khaki tunic over a white shirt, with khaki turban, trousers, and puttees — was also worn in East Africa. Johnston refers to a more colourful undress outfit, which presumably reflected the personal preferences of the men rather than being official issue. This included white shirts and trousers, crimson leather slippers, and turbans in 'blush-rose' or other bright colours. All the pictures from this well-illustrated source confirm that the Snider rifle was still being used by Sikh troops at this time, even though the re-equipment of the Indian Army with Martini Henrys withdrawn from British units was already under way.

Detail 109a is from the same source as detail 106b, and shows a much taller variety of turban which is worn by several of the Sikh officers in the picture. Gregory's photograph referred to above shows a variety of shapes and sizes of turban among the Sikh rank and file, confirming that this style was not necessarily confined to officers.

110–112. SUDANESE SOLDIERS 1890–98 The Sudanese soldiers who served the IBEA Company, and later the government of Uganda, were recruited into British service from the survivors of Emin Pasha's

Egyptian garrison. They had originally worn Egyptian-supplied uniforms consisting of a red fez and white tunic and breeches, with the later addition of a blue jersey (known as a *kanzu*, which was also the name given to the long Arab gown) and puttees. However, they had been cut off from all resupply for several years, and all observers commented on their unmilitary appearance. Lugard, who located them in 1891, found most of them wearing long shirts made of oxhides, with the officers in home-grown cotton. He provided new blue jerseys to replace their old torn ones, but clothing issues were still erratic and they continued to look extremely heterogeneous for several years. In 1893 Portal found them 'in every sort of uniform' — which if anything was complimentary, since other accounts describe nothing resembling a uniform at all. In the same year, according to an agreement with the IBEA Company, the men were to receive new issues of red fezzes, blue jerseys, and white breeches, with khaki tunics and breeches for the officers, but the Company was unable to honour its agreement and instead issued lengths of white or grey cloth for the men to make up their own clothing. In 1894 Colonel Colville described 'pairs of calico drawers, pretty equally discoloured ... calico tunics, cut to suit the taste of the wearer, or faded blue jerseys ... [Some had] worn-out "tarbushes", the majority wearing broad-brimmed straw hats of native make, decked with the feathers of the golden-crested crane.' Hats, he says elsewhere, were 'of every conceivable size and pattern'. In the same campaign, Lieutenant Vandeleur described their jerseys as much patched, and their breeches as having been originally white but by then 'much the same colour as the ground'.

In 1895, when the Sudanese were reorganised into the Uganda Rifles, the uniform was at first unchanged. It was not until after the mutiny of 1897 that the authorities made a serious effort to provide better clothing. For a while the men were placated with whatever items came to hand, including scarlet tunics and dark blue trousers from old British Army stocks, but it is unlikely that these were ever worn in the field. Campaign dress was gradually standardised as a blue jersey, white or khaki breeches, and a red fez, with the native officers in khaki. Some photographs show officers and NCOs wearing what appear to be blue side caps. There was now also a full dress uniform consisting of a red fez, blue tunic, breeches and puttees, and a black waist belt.



Fig 109



Fig 110



Fig 111



Most of the 600 Sudanese recruited in 1891 still had their Egyptian Army Remington rifles — although many of them were in a bad state of repair — but some men possessed only ancient percussion muskets. In 1894 Vandeleur found one soldier carrying ‘an old 4-bore gun, which originally belonged to Sir Samuel Baker’, though he would have had to have been exceptionally strong to be able to fire this massive weapon effectively. By this time, however, an unknown number of Sniders had already been issued, and Vandeleur brought with him some Martini Henrys, the first consignment of these rifles to reach Uganda. The Martini Henry was a significant improvement on the Snider, as it had a flatter trajectory and was said to be as accurate at 1,000 yds (914 m) as the Snider was at 600 yds (549 m). It is unlikely, however, that either weapon was effective at such ranges in the hands of the Sudanese, as there was insufficient ammunition to enable them to practise shooting. A mixture of Sniders, Remingtons, and Martinis remained in service throughout the decade.

Figure 110 is one of a group of ‘mutinous Nubian soldiers’ depicted in the *Illustrated London News* in May 1899. Both his shirt, which is obviously too small for him, and his baggy trousers appear to be white, in contrast to the blue jerseys worn by most of his comrades.

Figure 111 is based on a photograph taken by Ewart Grogan in Uganda in the late 1890s. He wears a locally made straw hat (decorated with a feather plume, as described by Colville) with what appear to be the regulation blue jersey and khaki or off-white breeches, and a leopard skin tied around his waist. The latter may have had magical significance, since Vandeleur describes the men —

who were mostly recruited from pagan southern Sudanese tribes — as wearing charms and amulets attached to their belts. Alternatively, as Colville says that the Baganda chiefs sometimes combined European or Arab clothes with ‘the leopard-skin apron which is the badge of chieftainship’, it may have been an attempt to impress the locals with his importance.

Figure 112 is based on a photograph of No.5 Company of the Uganda Rifles, c.1897, acting as escort to a Maxim gun (see Figure 114). Most of the men in this picture are wearing a similar uniform of blue jersey and khaki or white breeches, with bandoliers around their waists. An NCO in the foreground wears a khaki tunic — apparently over the top of a blue *kanzu* — and long white or khaki trousers like those of Figure 110, while a couple of the men in the ranks also wear shirts or tunics in white, or possibly light khaki. The most common headgear is the fez, with a few soldiers appearing in dark coloured turbans, or pale-coloured hats like the one shown here. A drawing of Vandeleur’s company fighting the Nandi (see p.129) shows men in the same outfit, with the addition of puttees. The chevrons on this man’s arm are from the same source as Figure 113, but do not necessarily denote his rank; during their years of isolation many of the Sudanese veterans had simply awarded themselves whatever rank insignia took their fancy, so that it was claimed that the only private soldiers to be found were fresh local recruits!

113. ASKARI OF THE EAST AFRICAN RIFLES, LATE 1890s By the late 1890s the dress and equipment of the askaris in British service in Kenya — from 1895 designated the East African Rifles — had been more or less standardised. This figure is one of the EAR’s African personnel, based on a drawing in Lugard’s *The Rise of Our East African Empire* and on the regulation uniform worn by the unit at the time of its incorporation into the King’s African Rifles in 1901. He wears a khaki tunic and trousers, brown leather equipment and shoes, blue puttees, and a red fez. Buttons were brass. There was apparently no cap badge. The Indian contingents in the EAR would have worn their usual turbans, resembling that of Figure 109.

Fig 112



Fig 113



Fig 114



This man's weapon is a Snider, which remained the norm even though a few Martini Henrys had been issued by this time. The bolt-action Lee Metford was not supplied to African troops during this

period. A photograph from the 1890s shows a locally recruited police unit in Mombasa wearing essentially the same uniform, without the cartridge pouches and the puttees. These men wear short trousers which extend just below the knee, and although some have shoes others are barefoot.

114. MAXIM GUN, LATE 1890s The source for this illustration is the same as for Figure 112, and the gunner wears the same blue *kanzu*, but has bare feet, longer khaki trousers, and — like many of the riflemen — a red fez. The Maxim was available in both .45 and .303 calibre, but unfortunately our sources do not often specify which type they refer to. Rate of fire was quoted in the official handbook of 1901 as 70 rounds per minute if using deliberate fire, or 450 rounds a minute for rapid fire.

The Maxim was far more reliable than earlier designs of machine-gun, such as the Nordenfeldt and Gardner guns which had occasionally been deployed by British naval brigades in Africa during the 1880s and early 1890s. It was subject to temporary malfunctions, but no battle in this theatre was ever lost as a result. It is interesting to speculate that many of the often quoted instances of Maxims jamming in Africa occurred at suspiciously opportune times. Lugard, for example, was desperate to play down the casualties which he had inflicted at the Second Battle of Mengo because of the political row which his intervention in the Baganda civil war had provoked, and his claim that neither of his guns worked properly was disputed by other witnesses. The cause of the Maxim's failure to fire on the rebellious Sudanese at Eldama Ravine in 1897 was almost certainly the reluctance of its operators, rather than a mechanical malfunction. Set against these instances must be numerous cases in which a demonstration of the weapon's firepower was sufficient to deter an attack or to cause the evacuation of an enemy position.

GERMAN EAST AFRICA

Since its unification in 1871 Germany had been an important trading partner of Zanzibar, and several German explorers had floated the idea of annexing the Sultanate, but it was not until 1884 that any action was taken. The British government had made it clear that Zanzibar itself was under its protection, but a mission from the Society for German Colonisation travelled secretly to the mainland and, with the connivance of the German Consul at Zanzibar, persuaded ten local chiefs in Usagara to sign treaties accepting German protection. The architect of this scheme, Doctor Carl Peters, had no official authority, and the chiefs were in any case not free to make treaties, as they were all officially subjects of the Sultan. It is likely that most of them had no idea what they were signing. Nevertheless, despite British objections the Kaiser responded by granting the Colonisation Society a *schutzbrief*, or charter, which automatically granted German protection to any territory which the Society acquired. In August 1885 Sultan Barghash was forced to accept the situation when a German naval squadron threatened to bombard his palace. The following year the first of two Anglo-German agreements conceded to Germany the entire hinterland of Zanzibar as far west as Lake Tanganyika, including Mount Kilimanjaro, with the exception of a 10-mile (16.1 km) deep strip along the coast.

THE DOAG AND THE ABUSHIRI WAR, 1888-90

The *Deutsch Ost-Afrika Gesellschaft*, or German East Africa Company, which had been founded in 1885, was given the task of administering and exploiting this territory. The Sultan also agreed to lease to the company the mainland ports of Dar es Salaam and Pangani. However, the mismanagement and greed of the DOAG quickly provoked a war with the Arab and Swahili inhabitants of the coastal zone. The most serious of their grievances was the introduction of a law which required all landowners to produce written evidence of their title to their land, on pain of forfeiture. In a country where few people were literate or had ever kept written records this was naturally interpreted as a mere pretext for dispossessing them. The last straw came when Lieutenant von Zelewski, the German resident in the port of Pangani, ignored an agreement that the DOAG and Zanzibari flags should be flown side by side and cut down the pole bearing the Sultan's flag. (This was the same Zelewski who was killed by the Hehe in 1891. He was already unpopular with the local Africans, who called him

Nyundo, or 'the hammer'.)

Commonly referred to as the Abushiri Rebellion, the uprising was not technically a rebellion at all, since most of the combatants had never sworn allegiance to the Germans in the first place. Its leaders were Abushiri bin al-Harthi, a veteran of Barghash's campaign against Mirambo in 1872, and a member of an old Arab family which in the past had often led opposition to Zanzibar; and Bwana Heri bin Juma, a prominent Seguhha chief who had become independent of Zanzibar after a successful revolt in 1882 but had adopted Arab ways and was now occupying the town of Saadani. Abushiri was now a wealthy plantation owner, but he had originally made his fortune as a slaver — a fact which enabled the Germans to misrepresent the war as a campaign against slavery. In fact Abushiri's forces consisted of a heterogeneous collection of Arabs, Baluchi ex-mercenaries, Arabised Swahilis and Seguhha, and tribal contingents from the interior. Among the latter were 5–6,000 *maviti*, who despite their name were not actually Ngoni but a mixture of refugees displaced by the Gwangwara; 6,000 Shambaa; and bands of Zaramo, Sagara, Makonde, and other tribes. Altogether the rebels are thought to have mustered about 20,000 men. One of Abushiri's principal officers, an artillery expert named Jehasi, came originally from the Comoro Islands and had served for a time in the Congo Free State's *Force Publique*. The Indian merchants of Zanzibar, whose trade was also threatened by the Germans, are said to have supplied the insurgents with large quantities of guns (including Winchesters, Sniders, and other breech-loading rifles) and ammunition. However, the British authorities supported the German war effort by imposing a naval blockade on the coast, which severely restricted the import of further consignments of weapons.

In August 1888 there were 56 German agents scattered throughout the coastal area, protected only by a few locally recruited askaris. Most of them were either blockaded inside their stations or forced to flee to Bagamoyo, where the presence of a fleet of German warships from the East Asia Squadron under Admiral Deinhard still kept a semblance of order. In Pangani the local Swahilis placed Zelewski and 50 askaris under siege. The DOAG presence was briefly reinforced by a landing party of 110 sailors from the cruiser *Carola*, who sacked the town, invaded the Arab governor's harem, and desecrated the mosques before withdrawing and leaving Zelewski to face the wrath of the inhabitants. The Zanzibaris then despatched two companies of their regular troops under General Mathews, but these and most of the DOAG askaris deserted to the enemy, and Mathews only just got Zelewski out alive.

The stations at Dar es Salaam and Bagamoyo still held out,

however. On 25 January 1889 Abushiri's lieutenant Suleiman bin Sef launched an assault on Dar es Salaam with 1,000 Swahili fighters but was defeated with heavy losses. The Germans then requested a ceasefire, which Abushiri agreed to, apparently unaware that an expedition was being prepared to rescue the DOAG and restore German prestige.

The *Wissmanntruppe*

Hermann von Wissmann, a German explorer who had made his name in the Congo, was appointed in February 1889 to raise a force of troops to suppress the 'rebellion' and impose German authority throughout its sphere of influence. This so-called *Wissmanntruppe* was landed at Bagamoyo in May 1889. With a budget of only two million marks, Wissmann had managed to put together a fairly powerful force by African standards. With the connivance of the British and Portuguese he had recruited Sudanese soldiers from Egypt, and Ngoni from Mozambique, whom the Germans referred to as 'Zulus'. They were organised into six Sudanese companies and one of Zulus, each consisting of around 100 men. Wissmann also had about 80 local askaris taken over from the DOAG, 30 Sudanese artillerymen, and 40 Somali sailors hired at Aden. The Sudanese were veteran soldiers who had seen action against the Mahdists, but they only understood orders in Turkish and so had to be accompanied by two Turkish officers and 20 NCOs to command them. The Zulus and local askaris had to be trained from scratch, so were at first less reliable, although all the companies eventually achieved a consistently high standard. The men were armed with old Model 1871 single-shot breech-loading rifles and carbines, and some of the Model 1871/84 type, which was basically a Model 1871 converted to magazine loading. The artillery consisted of a dozen 47 mm field guns, a 60 mm mountain gun, a Maxim machine-gun, and at least two 37 mm *Schnellfeuergeschütz*, or revolver cannon. An additional 60 mm gun arrived soon afterwards.

Wissmann also had 19 German officers, two medical officers, and 56 NCOs. He found Bagamoyo held by a few loyal askaris and several hundred musket-armed Nyamwezi traders who had thrown in their lot with the Germans. The Somalis and a few German sailors were left to strengthen the garrison, while 200 Marines based at Dar es Salaam, placed under Wissmann's command by Admiral Deinhard, accompanied the expeditionary force. Two companies of Sudanese were detached to hold Dar es Salaam in their absence. (In fact these 'Marines' — although usually referred to as such in contemporary sources — were apparently improvised landing parties made up of ordinary sailors rather than members of the *Seebattillon*, or Imperial

The Bagamoyo Expedition, 1889

The expedition sent against Abushiri's stronghold in May 1889 consisted of: 200 German 'Marines' and sailors, drawn from the cruisers *Leipzig*, *Schwalbe*, *Sperber*, *Carola*, and *Pfeil*; 40 German Army NCOs deployed as sharpshooters; four companies of Sudanese askaris and one of Zulus, totalling about 500 men; 50 local askaris; 100 Nyamwezi irregulars and porters; a 60 mm mountain gun; and two revolver cannon.

Wissmann's first clash with Abushiri — at his camp in Useguhha, a few hours' march north-west of Bagamoyo — set the pattern for the rest of the war. About 800 Arabs and local allies stood on the defensive behind a wooden palisade, supported by at least one old muzzle-loading cannon (Becker says there were three). While the Sudanese advanced to within 300 m (328 yds) and exchanged fire with the defenders, the revolver cannon quickly silenced the Arab artillery. However, the small 37 mm shells had little effect on the men sheltering behind the large logs which made up the palisade, so Wissmann was obliged to deploy his troops for an assault. About half of the defenders then apparently advanced into the open and engaged in a firefight with the German right wing, halting their advance for a while until the Marines rushed forward and climbed over the palisade, followed by a company of Sudanese. The first officer to enter the *boma*, Lieutenant Schelle, was shot dead, but the men behind him tore gaps in the palisade and fought their way through. Most of the 400 Arabs outside the *boma* retired into the bush, but many of those caught inside were bayoneted by the Zulus before they could escape. The Germans found around 100 dead defenders, and estimated that a similar number of wounded had been evacuated. Their own losses were slight: nine dead, and 7–13 wounded, depending on which source we believe.

The results of the victory were far-reaching. Many of Abushiri's fighters dispersed into the bush to carry on guerrilla warfare, although their leader escaped and raised a new army, including several thousand more *maviti*. Lieutenant Rochus Schmidt, defending Dar es Salaam, organised a counter-attack on his own initiative and routed the besiegers. Many of the *maviti* now abandoned the war and went home. At Bagamoyo the garrison under Commander Gravenreuth also raised the siege, by occupying the Kingani Plateau which overlooked the town. Then on 6 June Wissmann attacked Saadani, which was under the control of Bwana Heri. Under cover of a bombardment from the cruisers *Schwalbe*, *Leipzig*, and *Pfeil*, and the gunboat *Mowe*, the

Wissmanntruppe attacked from the landward side simultaneously with a landing from the sea, employing 530 men and two guns in total. The *Mowe*, which will serve as an example of a typical German gunboat, carried the formidable armament of five 5-inch guns and five revolver cannon. Meeting little resistance, the Germans quickly secured and then burnt the town. Bwana Heri retreated to his stronghold at Mlembule, 15 miles (24 km) from the coast in the mountains of Usagara.

The capture of Pangani, July 1889

Pangani was occupied by about 3,000 Arabs and Swahilis under Suleiman bin Nasr, who also possessed five old brass cannon. The defenders had fortified the town, which was situated on the north bank of the Pangani River about two miles (3.2 km) above its mouth. They had also blocked the estuary with chains, and placed a strong detachment in a fortified position on a wooded headland on the south bank called Ras Muhesa, which overlooked the river mouth.

On 8 July the ships which had taken part in the bombardment of Saadani, with the addition of the cruiser *Carola* and the gunboats *Munchen* and *Max* (the last two protected by iron plates along their sides and around the revolver cannon mounted on their decks), sailed to Pangani and opened fire on Ras Muhesa. The garrison in the town responded by sending reinforcements across the river, under indirect shellfire from *Schwalbe*. Wissmann then landed his forces south of the headland in three columns, the first consisting of the 1st and 3rd Sudanese companies under Doctor Schmidt; the second of the 4th Sudanese, the local askaris, and a Maxim gun, under Lieutenant Zelewski; and the third of the 2nd Sudanese and the Zulu company, under Commander von Eberstein. Admiral Deinhard's 200 Marines remained on the ships as a reserve.

Schmidt's column assaulted Ras Muhesa with the bayonet, while Zelewski and Eberstein led their men round behind the enemy position to the river bank, brushing aside a few Arab skirmishers on the way. Perhaps because of the wooded terrain, the defenders of Ras Muhesa seem not to have been able to shoot effectively, and as the German troops closed in they retreated down the slope to the west, where they ran into the second column and were dispersed or captured. Zelewski then set up his Maxim on the shore opposite Pangani and opened fire on the trenches on the eastern side of the town, which the defenders quickly evacuated.

Munchen and *Max* then sailed up the river and bombarded Pangani with their revolver cannon. It is not clear what had happened to the chains across the river mouth; either they had by now been

removed or the shallow draft of the gunboats enabled them to be negotiated safely. The Arabs returned fire with their own cannon, but these were soon silenced. Admiral Deinhard, who had not realised that the *Wissmanntruppe* was already victorious, had landed his Marines north of the river, but by the time they reached Pangani Doctor Schmidt's column had already crossed the river and cleared the town. The Arabs fled along the river bank to the west, pursued by the *Munchen* with the Maxim mounted on board, while Wissmann fortified Pangani for use as a base for further operations.

The siege of Mpwapwa and the Battle of Jombo, July–November 1889

Abushiri now reappeared 200 miles (322 km) inland at Mpwapwa, where the most remote of the DOAG stations was held by two German agents, Nielsen and Griese, and a small group of askaris. Nielsen was killed in his bedroom by an Arab assassin, whereupon Griese and the native officer of the askaris fled. Rather uncharacter-istically, the remaining askaris appear to have fought on determinedly, beating off several attacks before being overrun. Meanwhile Griese succeeded in reaching safety and informed Wissmann that Abushiri was at Mpwapwa. A column of four companies (two Zulu, one Sudanese, and one of local askaris), reinforced by a revolver cannon, a Maxim, and a band of armed Nyamwezis under Rochus Schmidt, set out in September. They reached Mpwapwa on 10 November and rebuilt the station, but Abushiri had again eluded them.

In fact the Arab commander had outmanoeuvred the *Wissmanntruppe* and led about 6,000 men (mostly *maviti* but also including a contingent of Hehe) against Bagamoyo, which was held by Commander Gravenreuth with 28 Germans and three companies of Sudanese. Gravenreuth advanced to counter-attack with his three companies operating independently, the one led by himself in the centre while those of Lieutenants Richelmann and von Bulow outflanked the enemy from the west and south respectively. The centre company was attacked by the entire enemy army, but held out in a desperate fight which lasted for two days. The askaris charged with the bayonet and drove back the Arabs, but were then outflanked by large numbers of *maviti*. They formed a square and beat off a series of attacks, inflicting heavy casualties among the closely-packed spearmen. Abushiri apparently intended to bring up his cannon to fire on the square, but it was hampered by the dense bush and did not arrive in time.

It seems highly probable that something had gone wrong with the Germans' communications, because the other two companies did

not arrive until the fighting was nearly over. Gravenreuth was lucky to survive, but his Sudanese succeeded in defeating Abushiri, who fell back when the German reinforcements eventually arrived, leaving behind 400 dead. A horde of pro-German Zaramo, who had so far taken little part in the fighting, pursued the retreating enemy for several hours, overrunning the Arab rearguard when it ran out of ammunition, and capturing their ineffective cannon. This defeat broke the morale of the Arab army, which never reformed. Abushiri himself again got away but was betrayed by a local chief in whose village he was hiding and was handed over to the Germans. On 15 December he was hanged in Bagamoyo.

Mlembule, December 1889–January 1890

However, Abushiri's fellow 'rebel', Bwana Heri, had already resumed the fight from his new base at Mlembule, intercepting caravans, besieging a mission station at Mandera, and even infiltrating warriors back into Saadani. His forces consisted of Seguhha, Zaramo, and Nyamwezi tribesmen, and he had been joined by Abushiri's artillery expert, Jehasi. Some of his men were armed only with spears and bows, but most had guns, including an unknown number of Sniders. Zelewski led four companies of soldiers and 600 allied Sukuma, organised into sections under German flags, in a *razzia* through Useguhha early in December. He relieved Mandera but failed to locate the main enemy stronghold at Mlembule.

Later the same month another German column under Rochus Schmidt entered Useguhha. It consisted of a company of Sudanese, one of Zulus, and 50 local askaris under Schmidt's personal command. The column was harassed by enemy skirmishers and eventually split up to pursue them. On 27 December Lieutenant von Bulow and the Zulu company accidentally came upon the stockade at Mlembule, apparently abandoned and with the main gate left open. A German sergeant and four Zulus marched inside, whereupon the concealed defenders opened fire. All five men were killed and the remainder of the Zulus broke and ran. Schmidt's askaris also ran away when they saw the fleeing Zulus, leaving the Sudanese company to cover their ignominious retreat. This victory encouraged the Seguhha to resume their raids on Saadani, although the town was now garrisoned by German Marines from the cruiser *Sperber*.

On 4 January 1890 Wissmann himself set out with his main field force for another attempt on Mlembule. The column was organised into two ad hoc battalions, one consisting of three Zulu companies and a Sudanese company under Zelewski, and the other of two Sudanese companies and a local askari company led by Rochus

Schmidt. The artillery comprised two 60 mm guns, two revolver cannon, and a Maxim. After an intense bombardment of the fort (during which the artillery fired 175 rounds), Lieutenant End, commander of Zelewski's Sudanese company, found a gap in the thorn bushes protecting it on the left. Wissmann therefore ordered the Zulus to deploy for a feint attack in the centre and on the right, while End's Sudanese company and Schmidt's askaris assaulted on the left.

The Sudanese halted 30 paces from the stockade and fired a single volley, then charged. The Seguhha defenders replied with a volley of their own, which was unusually effective by native standards. It appears that Bwana Heri (or perhaps Jehasi) had recognised the danger of firing too high, which was the usual problem with African troops, and instead ordered his men to aim low. The result was that the front rank of the Sudanese was shot down, mostly with non-fatal leg wounds. However, their colleagues advanced over them and broke into the stockade, at which point the Seguhha — who had obviously pinned all their hopes on this tactic — fled.

Bwana Heri retired to a new stronghold at Palamakaa, two days' march away, while the Germans assembled another expedition. The *Wissmanntruppe* had now received 46 more officers and NCOs from Germany, including the half-Scottish Tom von Prince, who was later to make his name in the Hehe War, and an officer from the General Staff, Major Liebert (although Wissmann, who had himself been promoted to the rank of major in November 1889, remained in command). In March a strong column of 100 Germans, 800 African troops, and five guns drove the enemy out of Palamakaa in the face of heavy fire, though without serious casualties, and on 6 April Bwana Heri surrendered with his remaining 400 followers. Unlike Abushiri he was allowed to return to Saadani under German protection.

Soon after the defeat of Bwana Heri, Wissmann received another 600 Sudanese reinforcements. This brought the strength of the *Wissmanntruppe* up to 1,800 men. Most of the coastal towns which were still in 'rebel' hands now submitted, but Kilwa and Lindi in the south held out until May, when they were taken by overwhelmingly strong forces of 1,200 and 900 men respectively, supported by naval bombardments. The capture of Lindi after two days of street fighting on 12 May 1890 marked the end of the war.

THE PETERS EXPEDITION, 1889–90

Carl Peters, who had been the Administrator of German East Africa until replaced in 1888 by Wissmann, returned to East Africa the following year. His task was to lead an expedition which was ostensibly intended for the relief of Emin Pasha in the Sudan, but was

in fact secretly backed by the German government in an attempt to seize territory north of Mombasa, where the line of demarcation between British and German possessions had not yet been finalised. It was originally planned to be a joint command under Peters and Wissmann, but the latter was diverted at the last minute to deal with Abushiri.

Three hundred Somali soldiers had been recruited for the expedition by Captain Rust, but the only shipping available which could transport such a force belonged to the British India Steam Navigation Company. The British government regarded the expedition as a deliberately provocative incursion into its territory, so the company refused to land it on the mainland and instead diverted it to Zanzibar. The Sultan, supported by the British, refused Peters permission to go inland, but he hired a steamer to take him to Witu and landed there secretly with only 27 Somali soldiers and 60 porters. The soldiers and a few of the porters were issued with repeating carbines, while the rest of the porters carried muzzle-loaders. There was also what Peters calls a 'little bush piece', probably one of the 37 mm Krupp *buschkanonen* produced in this period for colonial warfare, which was provided with 100 rounds of canister, but this was abandoned before the party entered Masailand. Peters claimed that if Royal Marines had been sent to stop him at Witu, as he expected, he would have resisted by force, but in fact the only British presence in the area was a small IBEA Company caravan led by a Mr Smith, whom J.W. Gregory calls 'a young shipping clerk'. Smith realised that he was too weak to intervene, but he shadowed Peters' expedition as it advanced inland up the River Tana, avoiding contact, until forced back to Mombasa by hostile tribesmen. This was perhaps the closest that the British and the Germans came to military confrontation in 19th-century East Africa.

Peters marched on north-westwards, hauling down the Union Jack from abandoned IBEA Company outposts, stealing livestock from peaceful tribes to supply his force, and fighting off several ambushes. He subsequently made the implausible claim that he had intended to progress peacefully, paying *hongo* and buying supplies, but was forced to fight his way through as the British had impounded most of his trade goods. He made a number of treaties with the Gallas and other tribes in an attempt to annex the country for Germany, being unaware that the German government was in the process of abandoning its claims to the region north of Mombasa. He then went on to provoke an unnecessary confrontation with the Masai (see pp.117–18), claim Lake Baringo for the Kaiser, and try unsuccessfully to annex Buganda (pp.95–96). The Peters expedition succeeded only in provoking an international outcry against German aggression without actually

acquiring any new territory. He later tried to justify his actions by claiming to have explored unknown territory along the River Tana, but his geographical notes were sketchy and — as subsequent British expeditions found — largely inaccurate. Even his opponents were forced to acknowledge what Gregory calls his ‘magnificent courage and great military skill’, but he was also very lucky. There can be no doubt that a company of Royal Marines (not to mention Jackson’s IBEA caravan of 400 riflemen, which he narrowly missed running into in Buganda) would have made short work of him.



*Lieutenant Franz Stuhlmann, Emin Pasha's second-in-command on his 1890 expedition and later Deputy Governor of German East Africa, in the uniform of a German officer. (Sir H.H. Johnston, *The Nile Quest*, 1903)*

EMIN PASHA'S EXPEDITION

After his ‘rescue’ by Stanley and his return to Bagamoyo, Emin Pasha left the service of the Khedive of Egypt and joined the Germans. He was sent back to the interior in April 1890 at the head of an expedition with wide-ranging objectives. His orders from Hermann von Wissmann, who was now *Reichskommissar* for German East Africa, were to secure the shores of Lake Victoria, including Buganda, as well as all the country lying between Lakes Victoria and Tanganyika, in order to ‘frustrate England’s attempts at gaining an influence’. With him were two German officers, Lieutenants Langheld and Stuhlmann, three German NCOs, 80 askaris and native irregulars, a revolver cannon, and 600 porters. At that time the most advanced German post

was at Mpwapwa, but Emin pushed on to Tabora, where he raised the German flag in August, and then to the southern shore of Lake Victoria. While building a station at Bukoba he received orders not to proceed to Buganda, which had now been officially ceded to the British sphere of influence. Nevertheless, Emin still hoped for an excuse to move in, and set up his temporary base at Bukoba, from where he made contact with elements among the Baganda who were hostile to the British, including King Mwanga himself. Possibly only the arrival of Lugard's column at Kampala in December 1890, and his victory over the opposing forces inside Buganda, prevented an Anglo-German clash by removing any pretext for Emin to intervene. It is likely, in fact, that if Emin had invaded before Lugard arrived he would have met with little opposition, as the only British presence at that time was a handful of IBEA Company agents under Ernest Gedge.

In April 1891 Emin was recalled by Wissmann, but he ignored his orders and marched on to Lake Edward, where the borders had not yet been surveyed. Here, remote from any witnesses, he made another attempt to grab British territory by signing a treaty with a warlord called Karukwanzi. The explorer claimed that Karukwanzi was the most powerful chief on the lake, 'a kind of Mirambo ... on a smaller scale'. A few weeks later, after Emin had moved on, Lugard arrived to find this chief flying a German flag in what was supposed to be part of the British Protectorate of Toro. Emin was thwarted again, however, because Karukwanzi — who was nowhere near as powerful as he had pretended to be — made no attempt to fight, but meekly surrendered to the British column.

From there Emin's expedition marched on into the unexplored interior, apparently trying to outflank the British and Belgians by linking up with the distant German colony in Cameroon, until he blundered into the middle of the Belgian-Arab war in the Congo and was murdered by the Arabs. The first part of his march, however, had introduced at least a nominal German presence into the western half of what was to become German East Africa.

THE MILITARY ORGANISATION OF GERMAN EAST AFRICA, 1891–1900

Following the establishment of official German government control in 1891, the personnel of the *Wissmanntruppe* were transferred en masse to the newly formed Imperial *Schutztruppe*, or 'Protection Force'. German East Africa was organised into 19 civil and two military districts. Garrisons were eventually established at 14 main stations. Their strengths in 1896 were as follows:

1st Company	At Moshi	personnel 5 Germans and 100 askaris
	At Marangu	1 German and 21 askaris
2nd Company	At Iringa	12 Germans and 257 askaris
4th Company	At Kilimatinde	7 Germans and 84 askaris
	At Mpwapwa	4 Germans and 60 askaris
6th Company	At Kilwa	6 Germans and 106 askaris
7th Company	At Pangani	6 Germans and 87 askaris
8th Company	At Lindi	7 Germans and 121 askaris
9th Company	At Ujiji	8 Germans and 133 askaris
10th Company	At Tabora	7 Germans and 119 askaris
11th Company	At Bukoba	8 Germans and 122 askaris
	At Mwanza	5 Germans and 72 askaris
12th Company	At Kilosa	5 Germans and 48 askaris

There was another garrison at Perondo, including one German officer, but other details are not known. It is not clear where the 3rd and 5th companies were at this date, but they probably accounted for most if not all of the seven German and 112 African soldiers who were elsewhere in the colony on patrols or expeditions. It is obvious that even the regular companies were not of a standard size, and that their establishments varied according to the requirements of each station in their districts. The large number of askaris at Iringa, for example, is presumably accounted for by the continuing Hehe resistance in that area.

All white personnel in German East Africa were officers, NCOs, or military specialists (though in 1888 40 NCOs had operated as an ad hoc unit of sharpshooters), the other ranks being exclusively African. Another source (its exact date is unknown) gives a breakdown of the ranks and specialties of the Germans, totalling 165 men, as follows:

Staff Officers	2
Captains (Company commanders)	11
1st Lieutenants	17
2nd Lieutenants	15
NCOs	60
<i>Oberstabsarzt</i> (Senior Doctor)	1
Assistant Doctors	15
Medical Orderlies	26
Paymaster	1
Paymaster Aspirants	13
<i>Feuerwerker</i> (Ordnance Officer)	1
Armourers	3

Not included in the above list are the *Bezirksamtmanns* or commissioners in charge of each station, who although not necessarily holding an official military rank would often command troops from the station's garrison. According to the same list, the African soldiers totalled 2,050, of whom 16 were officers and 134 were NCOs. The

askaris of the *Schutztruppe* were intensively trained and well treated. In 1898 their pay was 30 rupees per month for private soldiers (compared to 16 rupees in British East Africa and 4 in Uganda!), and 150 rupees a month for NCOs. Each man also had a servant to carry his kit and cook his meals when on campaign. The result of this treatment was that morale was extremely high, and the soldiers came to be regarded as a sort of aristocracy among their own people, so that there was no shortage of volunteers. Most of the original African personnel were enlisted in the Sudan, Somalia, and Mozambique, but they were supplemented by increasing numbers of local recruits, principally from the Hehe, Ngoni, and Nyamwezi tribes. There were also large numbers of irregulars or 'Ruga-Ruga', drawn from among the Nyamwezi, Ngoni, Sango, and Chaga, who fought under their own leaders and with their own weapons.

German administration in East Africa was notable even at the time for its inflexibility, and for the unsympathetic attitude of many of its personnel towards native traditions. Numerous observers remarked on the poor quality of the uneducated junior officers and NCOs who were left to man isolated stations with little control from above, and on the atrocities against the natives which frequently resulted from this policy. The African askaris themselves were accustomed to steal food and women from the locals, and were seldom if ever punished. Furthermore, officials like Peters and Zelewski had set a precedent for the use of force in response to the slightest sign of dissension.

Partly for this reason the Germans were involved in much more extensive and protracted fighting than their British contemporaries, and even at the very end of the century the military budget of German East Africa was about twice that of its British neighbour. The most significant conflicts were against the Hehe, Chaga, and Nyamwezi, which are discussed in the chapters dealing with these tribes. The coastal Arabs were not entirely subdued after the war of 1888–90, however. Hassan bin Omari, who had held Kilwa in alliance with Abushiri, revolted in 1894 while the Germans were heavily committed against the Hehe, and attacked Kilwa, which was held only by 40 police. Four companies of the *Schutztruppe* were despatched under Lieutenant von Trotha, who stormed Hassan's inland stronghold and eventually captured and hanged him. At the same time Bwana Heri bin Juma tried to rebel again, but was forced to flee into exile in Zanzibar.

Armament

The standard small arms of the *Schutztruppe* were the same as those issued to the armed forces in Germany: the Model 1871/84 11 mm

magazine rifle, and subsequently the 1888 Commission rifle in 7.92 mm calibre. The German armed forces were slower than the British to adopt machine-guns, and the Maxim was not officially taken into service by the Marines until 1897, and by the Army until 1899. However, the orders of battle quoted above show that many of these weapons had actually been deployed in East Africa before this date. When adopted officially they were mounted on tripods, but those fielded in the late 1880s and early 1890s may have been carried on the more mobile, if more conspicuous, wheeled carriages which were popular at this time.

The *Schnellfeuergeschütz*, or revolver cannon, was a copy of the original French Hotchkiss weapon of the 1870s, which had been adopted by the German navy as an anti-torpedo boat weapon, and subsequently by the army in Europe for fortress defence. In 1890 these weapons were replaced by a larger calibre gun, and the revolver cannons were put into storage. It therefore seems likely that Wissmann took them to Africa because they were about to be discarded and so were available cheaply, rather than because they were regarded as particularly suitable for colonial warfare. They had five barrels in 37 mm calibre and were operated manually by a crank, on a similar principle to the Gatling gun. Maximum range is quoted as 2,000 yds (1,828 m), and rate of fire was between 30 and 60 rounds per minute, depending on the strength and stamina of the man working the crank. There was a canister round available, with a maximum range of 300 yds (274 m), but it is not clear whether this was ever used in Africa.

Battle reports suggest that the *Schnellfeuer-geschütz* was employed tactically in the same way as the field artillery, for bombardment of defensive positions at long range. It is occasionally described as being ineffective against fortifications because of its small calibre shells, but this criticism could equally well have been levelled at most of the field artillery of the time. One German writer refers to 47 mm revolver cannon being used by the *Wissmanntruppe*, but this may be an error, as other authorities state that they were manufactured only in 37 mm calibre.

FIGURES

115 & 116. DOAG ASKARIS, c.1889 The locally recruited askaris of the DOAG wore a white shirt and trousers, and a red fez with a black tassel at the back. The short-sleeved collarless shirt had three parallel strips of braid, in the German colours of black, white, and red, running over the shoulders and across the front, as shown in Figure 115. This braid also extended across the back in a similar fashion.

Buttons were black. The trousers are sometimes described as knee-length, but in most contemporary pictures they are full length, as shown here. The differences between this man and Figure 101 are fairly minor; his shirt buttons down the front and has no collar, but in the early days at least of the DOAG men dressed like Figure 101 might have been found fighting alongside him.

Figure 116 is based on a photograph in Rochus Schmidt's *Deutschlands Kolonien*, which shows several askaris in non-regulation outfits. His shirt has longer sleeves, extending to just below the elbow, and a wide collar. One of the figures in the photograph has such a collar in what appears to be a contrasting colour, but in other cases it is white. Strips of a different colour over the shoulders are also a possibility, but the original is too poor to draw any definite conclusions, and this may be a result of a clumsy attempt to retouch the braid strips as worn by Figure 115. This man has wrapped a cloth around his fez to form a sort of turban. This could be grey or yellow, as these were the colours originally worn by the men of the *Wissmanntruppe* which absorbed the DOAG personnel in 1889, but in the photograph it appears to be white. What is clear is that there were numerous unofficial variations of the DOAG uniform, with worn-out items perhaps being replaced with cotton loincloths and other items of ordinary native dress. This is not surprising in view of the chronic shortage of money which plagued the company. For the same reason, weapons might be a very mixed bag, including old percussion muskets as well as more modern items like the Model 71/84 rifles and the repeating carbines issued to Peters' Somalis.

117. WISSMANNTRUPPE ASKARI, c.1890 This is a member of one of the Sudanese companies recruited by Wissmann in 1889, based mainly on an illustration in Rochus Schmidt's book depicting the garrison of Tabora. He wears a khaki jacket and trousers, blue puttees, and brown leather shoes. The buttons on the jacket were brass. Originally the headgear was similar to that of Figure 116, consisting of a fez with a pale grey or yellow turban wound round it, but at the end of 1890 this was replaced by the tarboosh with neck flap as shown here, in a shade of light grey. In 1889 the Zulu company had a blue jacket and trousers instead of khaki, bare feet, and a low 'pillbox'-shaped fez like detail 117a. This was apparently red, like the headgear of the other units. In the following year the Zulus changed over to khaki, but continued to go barefoot and retained their distinctive fez.



Fig 116



Fig 117



Fig 118



Fig 119



It appears that many of the former DOAG askaris who joined the *Wissmanntruppe* retained their old uniforms for several years. The Somali sailors and the locally recruited 'Wali Askari', or village police, were dressed the same as the DOAG troops, except that the former generally wore straw hats, and the latter lacked the tassel on the fez. Wissmann brought with him a supply of 11 mm Model 71 and 71/84 breech-loading rifles and carbines to equip the front-line troops, but the police units retained their muzzle-loaders.

The red sash over his shoulder identifies this man as a native NCO. Rank badges for NCOs were in the form of chevrons, worn point downwards on the sleeve: one for a lance-corporal or *ombasha* (a title derived from the Turkish *onbashi*, or 'leader of ten'); two for a *schausch* or corporal; three in the case of a *betschausch* or sergeant; and four for a *sol* or *feldwebel*. Until 1890 these chevrons were blue and worn on the lower right sleeve, but subsequently they were changed to red and moved to the upper left arm.

118. TURKISH EFFENDI OF THE WISSMANN-TRUPPE, c.1891 *Effendi* was the title given to the Turkish or Egyptian officers who were recruited with the Sudanese, denoting a rank equivalent to a German *Leutnant*. He wears the same tarboosh, trousers, and puttees as his men, combined with a jacket of German NCOs' pattern, also in khaki. His insignia of rank are three five-pointed gold stars on each shoulder strap.

119. SCHUTZTRUPPE ASKARI, c.1896 From 1896 the askaris of the *Schutztruppe* wore the uniform shown here, taken from a photograph in Graudenz and Schindler's *Die Deutschen Kolonien*. The system of rank badges was the same as for the *Wissmanntruppe*, but the tarboosh,

jacket, and trousers were now all in a yellowish shade of khaki, sometimes described as 'yellow-tan'. The regulation puttees were grey, but the old blue ones were often worn alongside them. Boots and equipment were natural leather, with a belt buckle which is variously described as either white or yellow metal. A black bayonet scabbard was worn on the left hip. The silver eagle badge on the front of the tarboosh was introduced soon after the formation of the *Schutztruppe*, but does not always appear in photographs of this period.

His rifle is a Model 1871/84. This was a magazine-fed conversion of the single-shot Model 1871, and had first been issued to the German Army in 1886. However, it still used black powder cartridges, and so was relegated to second-line troops when new smokeless powder weapons appeared soon afterwards. Both the Model 1871 and the 71/84 were still in widespread use in Africa in 1914, and were considered to be superior to more modern small calibre rifles for colonial fighting because of the stopping power which their larger calibre gave them. Their main disadvantage for European warfare — the thick smoke which gave away the firer's position — was not regarded as important in Africa, where potential opponents such as the Hehe and Ngoni still relied on close combat rather than musketry. *Effendis*, or native officers of the *Schutztruppe*, wore the same jacket as Figure 118, but with white metal buttons. The cuffs were piped in cornflower blue, and the stars on the shoulder straps were now in white metal.

120. GERMAN SAILOR, c.1889 This figure is based on a photograph from the same source as Figure 119, showing a landing party from SMS *Leipzig* in Bagamoyo during the Abushiri War. At this period the German navy wore a tropical outfit very similar to the British one, in white with a blue collar. The major difference is the white sun helmet seen here; the black-white-red cockade shown on the front is not evident in the photograph, but appeared on most German sun helmets of the period. A significant minority of the men in this picture are wearing straw hats instead of the helmet. Their rifles are the usual Model 71/84s, retained by the Navy until after 1900.

Fig 120



Fig 121



Fig 122

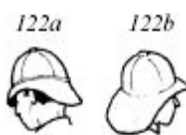


Fig 123

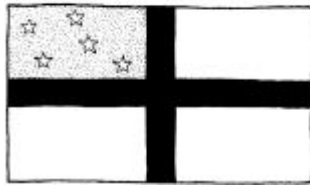


Fig 124

124a



124b



121. GERMAN NCO This man is wearing the regulation Field Service Dress which was officially worn on garrison duty. The jacket and trousers were pale grey, with white piping down the jacket front, on the collar and cuffs, and down the sides of the trousers. Leather equipment and boots were brown. The sun helmet was not regulation issue with this uniform, but in contemporary photographs it is often seen being worn with it. It may have appeared in white, grey, or khaki. By 1890 German Army personnel were being issued with their country's first purpose-built bolt-action magazine rifle, the 1888 Commission model or *Reichsgewehr*, which differed in appearance from the Model 71/84 only in minor details. It was, however, a superior weapon in most respects, although the stopping power of its 7.9 mm ammunition was suspect. It had an up-to-date clip-loading system, rather than the tube of the 71/84 into which rounds had to be loaded individually, and the more powerful smokeless powder gave it a theoretical range of 2,000 m (2,188 yds) instead of its predecessor's 1,600 m (1,750 yds). Both the rifle and its ammunition were also considerably lighter.

122 & 123. GERMAN OFFICERS Several photographs in Rochus Schmidt and other books of the period show posed groups of German officers wearing the sort of mixture of military and non-regulation items demonstrated here. Figure 122 is wearing the White Drill uniform which was favoured by most German officers for campaigning in the colonies. Sun helmet, jacket, and trousers were all white. Light blue piping sometimes appeared down the front of the jacket and the sides of the trousers. Officers' rank was indicated by black, silver, and

red braid on the white shoulder straps, and by horizontal light blue stripes on the lower sleeves. This figure's double stripe with a loop above it shows that he is a senior lieutenant; junior lieutenants had one stripe, captains and majors three. With this uniform NCOs wore light blue patches on the upper sleeve, bearing silver chevrons pointing downwards.

This outfit was generally worn with white canvas shoes (brown for NCOs) and a white sun helmet. The helmet was lined inside in green, and usually bore either the black-white-red cockade or a small metal eagle badge on the front. No belt or other leather equipment seem to have been worn over this uniform. The sword, carried in a black scabbard, was sometimes worn on campaign, although a military or hunting rifle was more usual.

Details 122a and b show some examples of variants on the standard sun helmet. The German type was lower and wider than that worn by the British, and often had an exaggerated peak at the back to protect the neck like detail 122b, but versions similar to the British type worn by Figure 106 were also used.

Figure 123 is wearing Field Service Dress, like Figure 121, but with the regulation cap. This was usually light grey with a black visor, white piping around the crown, and a white band round the bottom of the crown. There was also a white version with a black band, bearing the usual cockade on the front. The collar insignia was the same as for the White Drill uniform, but the sleeve braid was apparently not worn with Field Service Dress.

Details 123a and b show alternative headgear associated with two well-known explorers who went on to take employment with the German colonial government. Like other African veterans, they have substituted some of their own more practical items of clothing for the issue equipment. Detail 123a is Emin Pasha, from a portrait in Rochus Schmidt's book, wearing his characteristic red fez with a white jacket. Detail 123b is Carl Peters, photographed in the 1890s. His slouch hat is probably grey, like those worn by European *Schutztruppe* personnel in other German colonies, which eventually became part of the Field Drill uniform formalised early in the 20th century. The brim of the hat worn with this uniform was pinned up at the right side and decorated with a large cockade, but to judge from contemporary photographs this was not the practice in German East Africa during our period.

124. GERMAN FLAGS Several different versions of the German flag were in use at this time, but a black, white, and red horizontal tricolour is by far the commonest type in illustrations. Apart from being flown by German garrisons and units on campaign inside German East Africa, it was also carried (illegally) through British

territory to Uganda by Carl Peters' German Emin Pasha Relief Expedition in 1889–90.

Figure 124b is the flag of the DOAG, consisting of a black cross on a white ground with white stars on red at upper left. It was the raising of this flag in place of that of the Sultan of Zanzibar at Pangani in August 1888 that precipitated the Abushiri War.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

NINETEENTH-CENTURY EXPEDITION AND CAMPAIGN ACCOUNTS

- Ashe, R.P. *Two Kings of Uganda*, London 1889.
- Austin, H.H. *With Macdonald in Uganda*, London 1903.
- Baker, S. *The Albert N'yanza, Great Basin of the Nile*, London 1866.
- 'Experience in Savage Warfare' *Journal of the Royal United Services Institution* 1873 (reprinted by Pallas Armata, 1995).
- *Ismailia: A Narrative of the Expedition to Central Africa for the Suppression of the Slave Trade*, London 1874.
- Becker, J. *La Vie en Afrique*, Brussels 1887.
- Bell, W.D.M. *The Wanderings of an Elephant Hunter*, London 1923.
- Boteler, T. *Narrative of a Voyage of Discovery to Africa and Arabia*, London 1835.
- Bright, R.G.T. 'Among the Soudan Swamps' *Wide World Magazine* IX, London 1902.
- Burton, R. *The Lake Regions of Central Africa*, London 1860.
- *Zanzibar: City, Island and Coast*, London 1872.
- Cameron, V.L. *Across Africa*, London 1877.
- Chaillé-Long, C. *Central Africa*, London 1876.
- Colville, H. *The Land of the Nile Springs*, London 1895.
- Decle, L. *Three Years in Savage Africa*, London 1898.
- Donaldson Smith, A. *Through Unknown African Countries*, London and New York 1897.
- Elton, J.F. *Travels and Researches Among the Lakes and Mountains of Eastern and Central Africa*, London 1879.
- French-Sheldon, M. *Sultan to Sultan: Adventures in East Africa*, Boston 1892.
- Grant, J.A. *A Walk Across Africa*, Edinburgh and London 1864.
- Gregory, J.W. *The Great Rift Valley*, London 1896.
- Grogan, E.S., and Sharp, A.H. *From the Cape to Cairo*, London 1900.
- Hill, G.B. (ed.). *Gordon in Central Africa, 1874–1879*, London 1881.
- von Hohnel, L. (trans. N. Bell). *Discovery of Lakes Rudolf and Stefanie*, London 1894.
- Hore, E.C. *Tanganyika: Eleven Years in Central Africa*, London 1892.
- Jackson, F.J. 'The Caravan, Headman, Gun-Bearers etc.' in C. Philipps-Wolley (ed.) *Big-Game Shooting*, London 1894.
- *Early Days in East Africa*, London 1930.
- Johnson, W.P. *My African Reminiscences, 1875–1895*, London 1924.
- Johnston, H.H. *The Kilima-Njaro Expedition*, London 1886.
- Krapf, J. *Travels, Researches and Missionary Labours in East Africa*, London 1860.
- Lloyd, A.B. *In Dwarf Land and Cannibal Country*, London 1899.
- Lugard, F.D. *The Rise of Our East African Empire*, Edinburgh and London 1893.
- Macdonald, J.R.L. *Soldiering and Surveying in British East Africa*, London 1897.
- Meinertzhagen, R. *Kenya Diary, 1902–1906*, Edinburgh and London 1957.
- Meyer, H. *Across East African Glaciers*, London 1891.
- New, C. *Life, Wanderings and Labours in East Africa*, London 1873.
- Owen, W.F. *Narrative of Voyages to Explore the Shores of Africa, Arabia and Madagascar*, London 1833.
- Patterson, J.H. *In the Grip of the Nyika*, London 1909.
- Peters, C. *New Light on Dark Africa*, London 1891.
- Portal, G. *The British Mission to Uganda in 1893*, London 1894.
- Powell-Cotton, P.H.G. 'Alone in Unknown Africa', supplement to the *Illustrated London News*, 31 October 1903.
- *In Unknown Africa*, London 1904.
- Roscoe, J. *Twenty-Five Years in East Africa*, Cambridge 1921.
- Schmidt, R. *Deutschlands Kolonien*, Berlin 1898.
- Schweitzer, G. *Emin Pasha: His Life and Work*, London 1898.
- Scott Elliot, G.F. *A Naturalist in Mid-Africa*, London 1896.

- Smith, C.S. 'Explorations in Zanzibar Dominions', *Royal Geographical Society Supplementary Papers* II, 1889.
- Speke, J.H. *Journal of the Discovery of the Source of the Nile*, Edinburgh and London 1863.
- *What Led To the Discovery of the Source of the Nile*, Edinburgh and London 1864.
- Stanley, H.M. *How I Found Livingstone*, London 1872.
- *Through the Dark Continent*, London 1879.
- *In Darkest Africa*, London 1890.
- Stanley, R., and Neame, A. (eds.). *The Exploration Diaries of H.M. Stanley*, London 1961.
- Swann, A.J. *Fighting the Slave Hunters in Central Africa*, London 1910.
- Thomson, J. *To The Central African Lakes and Back*, London 1881.
- *Through Masai Land*, London 1885.
- Tucker, Bishop A.R. *Eighteen Years in Uganda and East Africa*, London 1908.
- Vandeleur, S. *Campaigning on the Upper Nile and Niger*, London 1898.
- Waller, H. (ed.). *The Last Journals of David Livingstone*, London 1874.
- Wellby, M.S. *Twixt Sirdar and Menelik*, London 1901.
- Wilson, C.T., and Felkin, R. *Uganda and the Egyptian Soudan*, London 1882.
- von Wissmann, H. (trans. M. Bergmann). *My Second Journey Through Equatorial Africa*, London 1891.

Also the reports of various authors published in the *Proceedings of the Royal Geographical Society*, London, vols 1–22, 1857– 78, and New Series vols 1–6, 1879–84.

CONTEMPORARY HISTORICAL, GEOGRAPHICAL, AND ANTHROPOLOGICAL WORKS

- Brown, R. *The Story of Africa and its Explorers*, London c.1896.
- Cunningham, J.F. *Uganda and its Peoples*, London 1905.
- Eliot, C. *The East Africa Protectorate*, London 1905.
- Felkin, R.W. 'Notes on the Madi or Moru Tribe of Central Africa' *Proceedings of the Royal Society of Edinburgh* XII, 1884.
- Freeman-Grenville, G.S.P. (ed.). *The East African Coast: Select Documents from the 1st to the Earlier 19th Century*, Oxford 1962.
- Gregory, J.W. *The Foundation of British East Africa*, London 1901.
- Hinde, S.L. and H. *The Last of the Masai*, London 1901.
- Hobley, C.W. *Kenya, From Chartered Company to Crown Colony*, London 1929.
- Hollis, A.C. *The Masai, Their Language and Folklore*, Oxford 1905.
- *The Nandi, Their Language and Folklore*, Oxford 1909.
- Johnston, H.H. *The Uganda Protectorate*, London 1902.
- *The Nile Quest*, London 1903.
- Lugard, F.D. *The Story of the Uganda Protectorate*, London c.1900.
- Merker, M. *Die Masai*, Berlin 1904.
- Nigmann, E. *Die Wahehe*, Berlin 1908.
- Petherick, J. 'The Arms of the Arab and Negro Tribes of Central Africa' *Journal of the Royal United Services Institution* IV, 1861.
- Roscoe, J. *The Northern Bantu*, Cambridge 1915.
- Routledge, W.S. and K. *With a Prehistoric People: The Akikuyu of British East Africa*, London 1910.
- Weule, K. (trans. A. Werner). *Native Life in East Africa*, London 1909.

MODERN WORKS

- Abbott, P. *Unknown Armies: British East Africa*, Leeds 1988.
- Adamson, J. *The Peoples of Kenya*, London 1967.
- Austen, R.A. *North-West Tanzania Under German and British Rule*, New Haven,

- Connecticut, 1968.
- Beachey, R.W. 'The Arms Trade in East Africa in the Late Nineteenth Century' *Journal of African History* III, 1962.
- Beattie, J.H.M. *Bunyoro: An African Kingdom*, Stanford, California, 1960.
- 'Bunyoro: An African Feudality?' *Journal of African History* V, 1964.
- Bennett, N.R. *Studies in East African History*, Boston 1963.
- *Mirambo of Tanzania*, Oxford 1971.
- Brown, M. *Where Giants Trod: The Saga of Kenya's Desert Lake*, London 1989.
- The Cambridge History of Africa*, vol 5: c.1790-c.1870, and vol 6: c.1870-c.1905, Cambridge 1976 & 1986.
- Driberg, J.H. *The Lango*, London 1923.
- Fabian, J. *Out of Our Minds: Reason and Madness in the Exploration of Central Africa*, Berkeley, California, 2000.
- Feierman, S. *The Shambaa Kingdom: A History*, University of Wisconsin 1974.
- Fukui, K., and Turton, D. (eds.). *Warfare Among East African Herders*, Osaka 1979.
- Gann, L.H., and Duignan, P. *The Rulers of German Africa*, Stanford University 1977.
- Girling, F.K. *The Acholi of Uganda*, London 1960.
- Grey, J. 'Anglo-German Relations in Uganda, 1890–1892' *Journal of African History* I, 1960.
- *History of Zanzibar From the Middle Ages to 1856*, Oxford 1962.
- Guadalupi, G. *The Discovery of the Nile*, Shrewsbury 1998.
- Hall, R. *Empires of the Monsoon*, London 1996.
- Harman, N. *Bwana Stokesi and his African Conquests*, Frome and London 1986.
- Headrick, D. 'The Tools of Imperialism' *Journal of Modern History* LI, 1979.
- Huntingford, G.W.B. *Nandi Work and Culture*, London 1950.
- *The Nandi of Kenya*, London 1953.
- Iliffe, J. *A Modern History of Tanganyika*, Cambridge 1979.
- Imperato, P.J. 'Luo Shields From Tanzania' *African Arts* XVI:1, 1982.
- Kenyatta, J. *Facing Mount Kenya: The Tribal Life of the Gikuyu*, London 1938.
- Kiwanuka, M.S.M. 'Bunyoro and the British' *Journal of African History* IX, 1968.
- *A History of Buganda*, London 1971.
- Lamphear, J. *The Traditional History of the Jie of Uganda*, Oxford 1976.
- 'Aspects of Turkana Leadership' *Journal of African History* XVII, 1976.
- 'The People of the Grey Bull: The Origin and Expansion of the Turkana' *Journal of African History* XXIX, 1988.
- Lawren, W.L. 'Masai and Kikuyu: A Historical Analysis of Culture Transmission' *Journal of African History* IX, 1968.
- Mair, L. *African Societies*, Cambridge 1974.
- Matson, A.T. *Nandi Resistance to British Rule*, Nairobi 1972.
- McLynn, F. *Hearts of Darkness*, London 1992.
- Miller, C. *The Lunatic Express*, London 1971.
- Moorehead, A. *The White Nile*, London 1960.
- Mungeam, G.H. 'Masai and Kikuyu Responses to the Establishment of British Administration' *Journal of African History* XI, 1970.
- Nyakatura, J.W. *Anatomy of an African Kingdom: A History of Bunyoro-Kitara*, New York 1973.
- Ochollo-Ayayo, A. *Traditional Ideology and Ethics Among the Southern Luo*, Uppsala 1976.
- Ogot, B.A. *History of the Southern Luo*, Nairobi 1967.
- (ed.). *Kenya Before 1900*, Nairobi 1976.
- Oliver, R., and Mathew, G. (eds.). *History of East Africa*, vol 1, London 1963.
- Osogo, J. *A History of the Baluyia*, Nairobi 1966.
- Page, M. *A History of the King's African Rifles*, London 1998.
- Pakenham, T. *The Scramble For Africa, 1876–1912*, London 1991.
- Peristiany, J.G. *The Social Institutions of the Kipsigis*, London 1939.
- Redmayne, A. 'Mkwawa and the Hehe Wars' *Journal of African History* IX, 1968.
- Reid, R. 'The Ganda on Lake Victoria: A Nineteenth Century Imperialism' *Journal of African History* XXXIX, 1998.
- Reusch, R. *History of East Africa*, Stuttgart 1954.
- Richards, A. (ed.). *East African Chiefs*, London 1960.

- Roberts, A.D. 'Sub-Imperialism of the Baganda' *Journal of African History* III, 1962.
- Roberts, A. *Tanzania Before 1900*, Nairobi 1968.
- Robinson, R., and Gallagher, J. *Africa and the Victorians*, London 1967.
- Rockel, S.R. 'The Nyamwezi and the Labour Market in Nineteenth Century Tanzania' *Journal of African History* XLI, 2000.
- Saitoti, T., and Beckwith, C. *Masai*, New York 1980.
- Shorter, A. 'Nyungu-ya-Mawe and the Empire of the Ruga-Rugas' *Journal of African History* IX, 1968.
- *Chieftainship in Western Tanzania*, Oxford 1972.
- Simpson, D. *Dark Companions*, London 1975.
- Spear, T., and Waller, R. (eds.). *Being Maasai*, London 1993.
- Spring, C. *African Arms and Armour*, London 1993.
- Stahl, K.M. *History of the Chagga People of Kilimanjaro*, London 1964.
- Steinhart, E.I. *Conflict and Collaboration: The Kingdoms of Western Uganda, 1890–1907*, Princeton, New Jersey, 1977.
- von Sydow, O. 'Deutsch Ost-Afrika' *Savage and Soldier* X:2–4, 1978.
- Trzebinski, E. *The Kenya Pioneers*, London 1985.
- The UNESCO General History of Africa*, vols VII–VIII, 1989 and 1985.
- Vandervort, B. *Wars of Imperial Conquest in Africa, 1830– 1914*, London 1998.
- Waller, R. 'The Masai and the British, 1895–1905' *Journal of African History* XVII, 1976.
- Walter, B.J. *Territorial Expansion of the Nandi, 1500–1905*, Ohio University 1970.
- White, G. 'Firearms in Africa' *Journal of African History* XII, 1971.

FOUNDRY BOOKS

All the FOUNDRY books are A4 sized hardback with traditional linen and gilt binding. Each volume is the definitive work on its subject, fully illustrated, comprehensively detailing organisation, tactics, dress, flags and weaponry.

SMALL WARS AND SKIRMISHES 1902-18:

Early Twentieth-Century Colonial Campaigns in Africa, Asia, and the Americas

Written by
Edwin Herbert,
Illustrations by
Ian Heath.



224 packed pages

Armies of the Nineteenth Century. The Armies of Asia:

BURMA AND INDO-CHINA

Written and Illustrated by Ian Heath
Burma: The Kingdom of Ava. The Kachins. The Karens. The Shan States. The Wa. Indo-China: Cambodia. The Lao States. Siam. Vietnam.



207 Fantastic
Pages



CENTRAL ASIA AND THE HIMALAYAN KINGDOMS

Written and Illustrated by Ian Heath

Bokhara, Chinese Turkestan, Kashgaria, Khiva, Khokand, Khotan, the Kirghiz, Kuldja, the Turcomans, Balistan, Bhutan, Jammu and Kashmir, Ladakh, Nepal, Sikkim and Tibet, and details of their interaction with the British, Russian and Chinese Empires. This region was home to the celebrated "Great Game".

167 Pages



CHINA

Written and Illustrated by Ian Heath

Imperial China, the Boxer Rebellion, the Ever-Victorious Army, Formosa, the Mongols, the Miao Rebellion, Nien Rebellion, Panthay Rebellion, Taiping Rebellion and the Tungan Rebellions.

174 Pages



INDIA'S NORTH-EAST FRONTIER

Written and Illustrated by Ian Heath

The Abors, the Akas, Assam, Cachar, the Chin-Lushai, the Daffas, the Garos, the Khamtis, the Khasis, Manipur, the Mikirs, the Mishmis, the Nagas, the Singphos and Tripura. First ever in-depth study of a neglected theatre of British colonial conflict.

168 Pages



Armies of the Sixteenth Century

Written and Illustrated by Ian Heath:

THE ARMIES OF
ENGLAND, SCOTLAND,
IRELAND, THE UNITED
PROVINCES, AND THE
SPANISH
NETHERLANDS
1487-1609
160 Pages



THE AZTEC & INCA
EMPIRES, OTHER NATIVE
PEOPLES OF THE
AMERICAS, AND THE
CONQUISTADORES 1492-1600

The Caribbean 1492-1603,
Mesoamerica c.1450-1600,
South America 1500-1600,
North America 1497-1608 &
Spanish America 1492-1600.
176 Pages

